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VOL. VII.

CONVERTS FROM INFIDELITY.



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EDINBURGH:
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1827.

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CONVERTS
FROM
INFIDELITY;
OR LIVES OF
EMINENT INDIVIDUALS
WHO HAVE RENOUNCED
LIBERTINE PRINCIPLES AND SCEPTICAL OPINIONS,
AND EMBRACED
CHRISTIANITY.

BY
ANDREW CRICHTON,
AUTHOR OF BLACKADER'S MEMOIRS, AND LIFE OF
COL. BLACKADER, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED FOR CONSTABLE AND CO.

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CONVERTS

FROM

INFIDELITY.

THE HONOURABLE ROBERT BOYLE.

IT is the disposition of some, who are ready to embrace with eagerness, every plea that might justify their aversion to the restraints and obligations of religion, to appeal in vindication of their unbelief to the authority of eminent names ; to the examples of sceptics who have possessed the greatest learning, and the most comprehensive genius, and who have devoted their whole lives to the sober investigation of historical or scientific truth. In every province of letters and philosophy, they find instances of distinguished scholars, endowed with the soundest understanding, whose minds have been inured to the most cautious forms of inquiry, and improved by the most accurate and extensive observation ; yet combining in their character many or all of these qualities, with an avowed contempt and rejection of Christianity.

In revolving the catalogue of illustrious names

which are scattered, with no sparing hand, over the wide range of modern literature, especially during the last two centuries, they can point out writers of the most splendid abilities, who were staggered with inexplicable difficulties, and declared it impossible to admit the evidences of revealed religion. This scepticism, they observe, was not confined to any solitary profession or peculiar rank in life. It comprehended a numerous class of celebrated philosophers, and spread itself through all the various departments of moral and experimental science. It was the creed of Hobbes, and Halley, and Emmerson, among the mathematicians,—of Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke among the nobility, whose works are justly admired, as displaying the finest talents, united with great delicacy of taste, and a lively imagination,—of Hume and Gibbon, the most acute and philosophical of all historians,—of statesmen, poets, and physicians, who have made an open and undisguised confession of their infidelity,—and of a multitude almost innumerable, of literary characters, who made the Jewish and Christian Scriptures the subject of their study and their writings, from Lord Herbert, the oldest and purest of our Deistical theorists, to Voltaire and his associates, who exposed with infinite humour the vices and absurdities of superstition, and attracted to their standard nearly all the higher orders of society throughout Europe.

Instances of so many concurring testimonies among the learned, in opposition to the credibility of Revelation, appear to them arguments sufficiently conclusive,—an irrefragable proof that the whole scheme is repugnant, in its general bear-

ings, to the dictates of enlightened reason,—that its foundations must be hollow and unstable, since they cannot endure to be approached by the light of science,—and that its evidences must be defective, since they have failed to command the assent and submission of men of talents, and do not always produce conviction on the minds of those who have examined them with attention. To believe a system of doctrines, therefore, so obscure in their nature and origin, whose pretensions are so equivocally supported, and have been denied by some of the profoundest philosophers, seems, in their judgment, to be the characteristic of a timid and narrow spirit, and to argue an imbecility of intellect, incapable of discriminating between truth and error.

Objections such as these, however futile and irrational in themselves, have not been without their effect in making proselytes to swell the ranks of infidelity. They have biassed the young and superficial, who are easily deluded by plausible sophistries. They have been the resource of the indolent, who want the ability or the inclination to reflect for themselves. They have attracted the sciolist and the conceited pretender to knowledge, from the literary fame with which they are associated; and they are espoused by the profligate, because they relax the sanctions of morality, and interpose a convenient excuse for irregular indulgences. This, as we have repeatedly observed, is the true origin of unbelief, more powerful than argument or example, and antecedent to all reasoning; and many who pretend to inquire, are not stimulated by any anxiety for truth, or any candid wish for information, but with the view of shelter-

ing their bad principles, under the specious garb of liberal sentiment and philosophical investigation. It is a process natural to the human heart, in order to justify its own criminal propensities, to seek for authorities to defend a position already assumed; and which, be the arguments strong or weak, pertinent or inconclusive, they are not disposed to abandon. It is thus that infidels and scoffers, under the influence of their passions, find it easy to discredit religion; and their rejection of its claims is quite accountable, without supposing any flaw in its evidences, or adopting the alternative that learning and genius, penetration of mind, and intrepidity of character, are all arranged on the adverse side.

That many individuals possessed of rare talents, who have done honour to science, and signalized themselves in almost every department of human knowledge, are to be numbered among the advocates and abettors of infidelity, is a fact too notorious to be disputed. The names on the list of philosophical unbelievers, are neither few in number, nor despicable in point of rank, or variety of endowments. Neither is it to be denied that they have started ingenious objections, both with respect to the doctrines of the Bible, and the proofs by which they are supported. There is scarcely a single truth within the compass of inspiration, which they have not boldly ventured to impugn, or brought into question by their abstruse speculations.

All this, however, can with no propriety of reasoning be adduced as an inference, that deep learning must terminate in irreligion, or conduct men of literary pursuits, or inquisitive studies, into the inextricable labyrinth of scepticism. It is no

difficult matter to involve the plainest, as well as the most serious and important truths in metaphysical obscurity, to expose them to derision by a stroke of sarcastic wit, or disseminate prejudices against them without foundation. There is not perhaps a more common talent, or one more easily acquired, than that of raising objections ; which, in the hands of a subtle and restless spirit, may become a dangerous instrument, as it tends not merely to perplex the mind with endless uncertainty, but to annihilate the very elementary principles, both of science and religion.

But the perversions and misapprehensions of truth, though they obstruct its influence, do not alter its nature ; and in general can prove no way injurious, except to those who want strength of discernment sufficient to perceive the fallacy and absurdity of such misrepresentations. Where opinions are erroneous, inquiries and objections are commendable, and highly beneficial ; and were the minds of literary men employed in the honest research of detecting truth, or prepared to embrace it under whatever system it might appear, the pretensions of revealed religion would have nothing to dread. Christianity does not shun or proscribe discussion, and would reckon it but a poor defence to refuse audience or toleration to the objections of its adversaries. But it demands that its cause be tried on its own merits,—that its credit be not assailed by other weapons than fair argument and legitimate reasoning.

This, however, is far from being the conduct of infidels. Among the rejecters of Scripture revelation, who affect to disbelieve, after an accurate and candid examination of the subject, it is quite remarkable,

that few, if any of them, either in ancient or modern times, have possessed the qualifications essential to the attainment of religious truth, or a temper suited to religious inquiry. With all their superior advantages in point of knowledge, they have been deficient in fair, serious, and upright intentions. Their minds were warped by prejudice, and pre-occupied with false theories, before their judgment had come to a determination. They were either inflated with conceit, and so wanted proper humility of spirit; or affected a singularity of thinking; or were immoral, and consequently exerted every faculty to invent excuses; and were disposed to embrace, in contradiction to reason or evidence, any error that flattered their appetites and passions. Many of them were absolute buffoons, who sported with every thing sacred, and turned even the belief of a Deity into a jest; or they were lively and volatile, but superficial men, who had great literary information, and a desultory knowledge of the sciences, but without much solidity of understanding, and obviously unacquainted with the actual state of human nature. They were, moreover, utter strangers to the genius of Christianity, entertained a violent aversion to its ordinances, or dwelt altogether upon its abuses and corruptions; in the hope of giving it a mortal wound, through the vices of its professors, or the false representations of its character.

In exposing faults and errors, they have indeed been eloquent and effective; and had they not blended the simplicity of truth with the absurd forms and appendages which human invention had super-added; they had done religion a kindness rather than an injury. But it is not dealing fair with its

claims to make them a topic for wit and raillery, or a theme of contention for literary wranglers; or to advance as arguments the follies of superstition, and the cruelties of wars, and massacres which stain the ecclesiastic page, as if the gospel of peace sanctioned the bloody deeds of bigotry, or armed its disciples with the sword of intolerance and extirpation.

Under these circumstances, it is extremely easy to account for the opposition and unbelief which Christianity has often met with among the learned. They had not the due preparation, and therefore could not possibly arrive with certainty at truth; any more than a philosopher, who, without a necessary foundation in preliminary studies, will never attain to eminence in science. It was not likely that men who had thrown off with impatience all moral subordination, who were elated by the pride of mental improvement, or so blinded with the mists of sceptical speculations, that no argument whatever could convince them, should embrace a system of doctrines which struck at the root of all their prejudices, and imposed such narrow and disagreeable restraints upon their conduct. All this admits of a ready solution; but it amounts to no argument against the truth of revelation, that some men of enlarged minds, who have traversed the whole range of literary or scientific attainments, but of haughty or perverse spirits, who do not choose to bring to the consideration of these important subjects, that modesty, candour, and humility of mind, which become the imperfection of human faculties, when contemplating the moral discoveries of Omniscient Wisdom, are occasionally led to spurn the whole, after a partial or pretended

examination, as a cunningly devised fable, the contrivance of knaves and impostors.

Were Christianity disposed, however, to rest any part of its defence on the authority of names, it might refer to many in the first ranks of letters and philosophy, who have investigated the subject with that candour and sobriety of spirit, of which infidels have been so notoriously destitute; and who have united all the acuteness of science, with a firm belief in evangelical religion,—men of the most opposite sentiments and pursuits,—who have speculated with the greatest freedom of thought,—examined with prying curiosity into the organic structure of matter, or carried the line and rule of demonstration to the farthest verge of the material universe. Authorities, it is true, however eminent, are not arguments, and have no claim to be admitted as a ground of faith; but they may serve, at least, to neutralize or refute those prejudices against revelation, which have no other support than human authority, by shewing that its divine original has been admitted, and vindicated by the most prominent names in the annals of literature, and in every field of human research.

Even in this competition, therefore, the suffrages of learning and science, would be found completely on the side of Christianity; and if infidel philosophers, with all their followers and partisans, were cast into the adverse scale, they would appear few in number and contemptible in character, when contrasted with its many able and celebrated defenders. Were the catalogue of its learned advocates to be recounted, it would be difficult to know where to begin, or when to leave off. Of divines, who have written in support of its evidences, and who are

entitled to rank in the highest class of human authorities, in respect of genius, abilities, and intellect, the instances are almost innumerable ; of men who have done honour to their profession, and were as competent to judge of the nature of revealed truth, as conceited sciolists or sceptical historians. Or should these be objected to as interested witnesses, speaking under the bias of professional prejudice, for there is frequently an unreasonable prepossession against the writings of the clergy, as if they were the dictates, not of conscience or conviction, but of party zeal or personal interest ; there are others to whom no such jealousy or stigma can attach.

Among distinguished laymen who have believed, or written in vindication of Christianity, and on whom no motive but a love of truth could be supposed to operate, there is such a catalogue of illustrious names, that it is almost impossible to enumerate, and may appear invidious to select. Such advocates are to be found in almost all different countries and ages ; of various sects and parties ; of opposite views on the minor points of religion ; yet all concurring with perfect unanimity in admitting its divine authority, and acknowledging the importance of its doctrines.

Were it necessary to urge examples instead of reasons, or advert to men of science among the laity, who have publicly avowed their conviction, after investigating, with all seriousness and accuracy, the grounds on which their faith was built, it might suffice to refer to Pascal, Leibnitz, M^r Laurin, and Euler, the first mathematicians of their time ; to Boerhaave, Zimmerman, Mead, Sydenham, Cheyne, Hartley, and Haller among the physicians,

and many other eminent members of that faculty, who were not only accomplished in all that was known of their art, but entertained the profoundest reverence for religion, and rendered it an essential service in their writings; to the moralists, Steele, Addison, and Johnson; to the poets, Milton, Cowley, Gellert, Gesner, Young, and Cowper; to the lawyers, Hale, Forbes, Hailes, Blackstone, and Jones; all men of the most exalted and capacious minds, and stored with the richest treasures of ancient and modern lore.

Or to mention others still more celebrated, and whose authority may carry greater weight; where are greater names to be found than those of Bacon, and Newton, and Locke, the fathers of philosophy, who broke through the barriers of ancient prejudice, and laid the foundations of modern science on the solid basis of induction and experiment? Had there been any flaw or artifice perceptible in the claims of revelation, none were better qualified to expose the imposture. The same bold and vigorous intellect, which abandoned the beaten paths of error, and destroyed prejudices in science, was equally capable of detecting and overthrowing fraud in religion. Yet these men were Christians, devoted much of their time to study the Scriptures, and confessed the more they read, the more decided was their persuasion of their truth, and the greater their admiration of their excellence. Their belief was founded on the most diligent and exact researches into its history, the authenticity of its records, the completion of prophecies, the character of its evidences, and the arguments of its adversaries.

Where are the infidels, it may be asked, who

can bear a comparison with these illustrious philosophers, either in extent of learning, depth of penetration, solidity of understanding, seriousness of mind, or respectability of moral character? If human testimony is allowed to be any criterion of faith, and certainly it ought, in justice, to be as admissible in favour of religion, as in opposition to it, and is in fact the only legitimate mode of answering objections that spring from examples rather than truth or reason; here is obviously a greater preponderance of evidence on the side of belief than infidelity; a more splendid array of names, all equally distinguished in science, and more unquestionably superior in virtue and piety, to which no stigma of superstition, no reproach of melancholy or intellectual imbecility can possibly attach.

The opinions of so many competent and unprejudiced witnesses, all verging like rays towards the same centre;—this harmony of minds, so highly gifted beyond ordinary nature, separated by distant ages, and different pursuits, yet joining as it were in unison to celebrate the truth of Christianity, and presenting at its altars the homage of their immortal wisdom, affords a remarkable proof of the unity and identity of that principle which forms the basis of their common conviction.

Against this concurrence of learned testimonies, it will not be the crude and random cavils of ignorant declaimers; the artful objections of sophistical reasoners; the sneers and unmeaning ridicule of profane wit; the shallow arguments of profligates and libertines, or any set of men under the dominion of passions which religion condemns; that will have any weight with reasonable men, or

stagger their belief in the authenticity of that religion, which claims the universal reverence and obedience of mankind.

Neither need the friends of piety be under any alarm, lest the foundations of their faith be sapped or weakened by the prying and inquisitive researches of human knowledge. Time has been when the boldest innovators in science durst not lift the veil that concealed the errors of religion : when learning was proscribed as an enemy to the church, and inquiries into the constitution of nature, condemned as rebellion against its Author. Such terrors, however, were the refuge of bigotted and contracted minds, and were founded on narrow and perverted interpretations of Scripture. The Brahmin and the Iman, the believers of the Shaster and the Koran, have solid reasons for protecting ignorance, and avoiding discussion ; but Christianity courts the light, and has nothing to apprehend from the most subtle and ingenious of its learned adversaries. It has gained fresh lustre from their discoveries ; and those sciences, such as astronomy, anatomy, and geology, which in their infancy were supposed to threaten its existence, and brought men of genius to the dungeon or the stake, have, in their advanced state, proved magazines and armouries to supply new proofs of its truth.

It is impossible to look at the former and present state of the world, without being satisfied that the evidences of religion have grown with the increase of knowledge : that they have been confirmed by the results of philosophical and antiquarian investigation ; that they coincide with the observations of travellers, and with the

local descriptions and historical allusions of geographers. Let then the improvers of arts and sciences exert their talents and their invention in every liberal and enlightened pursuit ; let them push their inquiries into the works of nature, with a free and fearless spirit, in the perfect assurance that a more intimate acquaintance with the works of the Deity, will never lessen our reverence or shake our belief in a religion, which claims him as its author and publisher.

Of this truth, a more striking and appropriate illustration cannot be given, than the virtuous and eminent philosopher Boyle, whose name is an ornament to his country, and claims the veneration of all posterity. What the historian Bayle has observed of Pascal, may, with additional force and propriety, apply to this amiable and celebrated character : That a hundred volumes of sermons are not worth so much as his single life ; and are far less capable of disarming infidels of the arguments and pretexts they allege for their unbelief. While libertines must feel mortified to contemplate his extraordinary devotion and humility, they must at the same time confess themselves deprived of a favourite, and what they reckon a formidable objection to Christianity, that none but feeble and contracted spirits, have ever professed themselves votaries of piety and religion ; since they may here behold the precepts of the one, and the practice of the other, exemplified in the highest degree, and carried to the nearest approach of human perfection, by one who has seldom been equalled for the variety and extent of his researches, and who is never mentioned but with compliment and enco-

mium in the history of almost every branch of experimental philosophy.

At an early period of his life, as he himself informs us, his mind was perplexed with doubts about the certainty of the Christian revelation ; and as he was naturally of a serious and reflective turn, they created no small degree of anxiety ; and set him to study and inquire more minutely, that he might be able to give a reason for his faith. But though this uncertainty subjects him to the charge or imputation of scepticism, it entirely exempts him from the odium that usually attaches to infidelity and irreligion. His doubts did not spring from libertine principles, nor were they assumed as an apology or excuse for irregular practices. They seem to have been the perplexities of a mind endowed with great sensibility, and of an inquisitive temper, that would not rest satisfied without finding ultimate reasons of belief, and prying into the very elements of knowledge.

This circumstance, however, may be regarded as giving his testimony the greater weight and effect, as he was not entangled by any previous systems or theories, nor biassed by his own passions, which are the greatest enemies to truth, and the most difficult obstacles to overcome ; but left to cool and unprejudiced reflection, to form his judgment according to the result of his investigations. His confessions have not, therefore, the suspicion of being dictated by sinister motives, or extorted from him on a bed of sickness, by the arguments and importunities of a priest. Never were doubts productive of more serious inquiry, or of happier consequences. Once confirmed in the truths of revelation, he bent his whole study to vindicate

and recommend them to others. The greater part of his life and his fortune were expended in illustrating their beauties and their usefulness, and in diffusing their influence. He was anxious to shew the world, that a knowledge of Nature was not incompatible with a firm belief in religion, and that it was possible for an experimental philosopher to be a sincere and zealous Christian. With this view he laboured in his writings to cement a friendly alliance between philosophy and divinity; to convert the results and discoveries of the one into arguments and illustrations of the other,—a study which forms the noblest application of science, and the most sublime employment of the human mind. From these cursory reflections, into which we have been inadvertently led by a consideration of his character, we shall now return to the history of his life.

THE HONOURABLE ROBERT BOYLE was a native of Ireland, and born on the 25th of February 1627. He was descended from an ancient English family, whose name and pedigree can be traced beyond the Conquest, and who are said to have been of Spanish extraction. Whatever truth there may be in this opinion, it is at least certain that the surname was of great antiquity in Spain; and that in the age of chivalry and romance, a Knight of this family came over to England, and signalized himself in a tournament held in the reign of Henry VI.

The earliest accounts of them in this country is to be found in Domesday Book, where they are mentioned as having their residence and estate at Pixley-Court, near Leadbury in Hereford. Various distinguished characters sprung from this line, who

filled important and honourable stations, both civil and ecclesiastical. These, however, it would be out of place to notice here, as they fall under the province of the herald rather than the historian.

Richard, the father of our philosopher, was a younger son of this family : and lived to become a very extraordinary person. Being born in a dependent condition, and obliged to supply the deficiencies of fortune by his own industry, he quitted his native country at the age of twenty-three, and went over to Dublin as an adventurer. Possessing the recommendation of a graceful person, and good natural abilities, he was taken into the service of the Government, and very soon acquired a distinct knowledge of public affairs. From these small beginnings, he gradually rose to power and honour ; and built on this slender foundation, a prosperity and renown, which had many admirers, but few equals. By his eminent services, he obtained the approbation and favour of his sovereign, and was advanced to the dignity of the peerage in Ireland, being created in 1616, Baron of Youghall, and four years afterwards, Viscount Dungarvon and Earl of Cork. His talents gave lustre to his official reputation, and added a very honourable supplement to his noble titles ; as he is generally distinguished in history by the epithet or surname of the Great Earl of Cork.

He was one of the ablest statesmen of his age, and took a very active and conspicuous lead in Irish affairs, both military and political. He did much to cultivate and civilize the barbarous inhabitants, by encouraging Protestant settlers from England, endowing free-schools, and making other expensive improvements. In the rebellion of 1641,

his loyalty was displayed with extraordinary magnificence. His castles he converted into fortresses, armed his servants and tenantry to the number of 500 horse and foot, which he put under the command of his four sons, and paid all out of his own estate. He was not more happy in his own greatness and reputation, than in the number and prosperity of his descendents. By his second wife, Catharine Fenton, only daughter of Sir Geoffry Fenton, Principal Secretary of State, and Privy Counsellor in Ireland, he had fifteen children, seven sons and eight daughters.

The character of the father seemed to entail wealth and honours, and even talents, on his whole family. His daughters were allied to some of the most eminent and powerful of the nobility; and his younger sons, even in their infancy, had titles conferred on them, such as are rarely bestowed, except on distinguished merit. Besides his eldest son Richard, who succeeded him in the Earldom of Cork, his second son Lewis was made Baron of Bandon-Bridge, and Viscount Boyle of Kinelmeaky; his third surviving son, Roger, was created Lord Boyle of Broghill; he was President of the Council in Scotland, under Cromwell, and made no inconsiderable figure as a political and dramatic writer. His next son, Francis, was honoured with the title of Lord Viscount Shannon, and like the rest of his brothers, bore a commission in the Irish service.

Robert was the youngest son and fourteenth child, born at Lismore, in the county of Cork, a noble and splendid country-seat belonging to his father; but which the ravages of civil war had reduced to a state of ruin and dilapidation. He

was the only one of his family that reached manhood without being honoured with a title. But he had an intrinsic worth which gave a higher lustre to his character, than royal or hereditary dignities could bestow ; and has earned for himself a distinction which was beyond the prerogative of kings to have conferred. In the quality and condition of his birth, he reckoned himself singularly fortunate, as they afforded him many external advantages, and were so exactly suited to his inclination and views, that, as he used to observe, had he been permitted to choose, his wishes would not have altered the assignment of Providence. A meaner descent, he was persuaded, would have exposed him to many discouragements and inconveniences ; as men of low extraction are seldom admitted into familiar or confidential intercourse with the great, and cannot always, even with the finest abilities, secure themselves from poverty and contempt. On the other hand, he considered titular greatness as an impediment to the knowledge of many important truths, which cannot be attained without mixing with inferior society ; and making condescensions, which, in men of rank, are sometimes reckoned degrading, or perhaps disgraceful.

To one disinclined as he was to the bustle and tumult of the world, and who courted with unwearied assiduity the calm and retirement of philosophy, the being born heir to titles and dignities would have been but a glittering kind of misery ; obliging him to embarrass himself with political cares and distractions, in order to support the credit of his family, and not unfrequently to abandon his favourite pursuits ; and thus build the ad-

vantages of his house on the renunciation of his studies, and the ruin of his own happiness. He therefore congratulated himself in being born in a condition that was neither so high as to prove a source of distraction, or a temptation to indolence, nor low enough to repress a generous ambition; and while it secured him respect and preferment among his equals, it protected him from the reproach which too commonly attends the humbler drudges of literature.

From his earliest infancy the greatest care was taken in forming both his mental and his bodily constitution. His father, who had a perfect aversion for the overweening fondness of parents, who train their children with such delicacy and tenderness, "that a hot sun or a good shower of rain, as much endangers them as if they were made of butter or of sugar;" and which in the end proves injurious rather than beneficial to their health, committed him to the care of a country nurse, with instructions to bring him up in the same habits of hardiness and frugality, as if he had been her own son. By being thus gradually inured to the vicissitudes of the weather, and to a coarse yet cleanly diet, he inherited a strength and vigour of constitution which enabled him to bear labour and fatigue; although the advantages, it appears, which this judicious treatment procured him, were not permanent, being subsequently lost by an excess of tenderness.

At three years of age he had the misfortune to lose his mother, who died at Dublin, February 16th, 1630; a lady of great beauty and accomplishments, amiable in her dispositions, and a pattern of virtue and religion; qualities which so

endeared her to her husband and family, that the anniversary of her death was always observed as a day of mourning. This calamity, the tenderness of his years prevented him from feeling with a sorrow proportioned to the loss he had sustained. But it was to him a subject of unfeigned regret ; and he esteemed it a singular unhappiness never to have seen so excellent a mother, so as to remember her ; more especially from the character he heard of her, and the great respect that was cherished for her memory. He never spoke of her but in terms of the warmest affection.

While at nurse, and associating with children of his own age, he unfortunately contracted a habit of stuttering, by mimicing this imperfection in some of his companions ; a practice which, though at first counterfeited, and made the occasion of merriment, became long a subject of great uneasiness to him. Many experiments were tried as the most probable means of cure, but it could never be perfectly removed ; so contagious is the influence of evil customs, that what is often imitated but in jest, comes to be acquired in earnest.

When about seven years of age he was recalled home ; and soon after, when on a journey to Dublin, where he was sent for to wait on his father, he narrowly escaped being drowned while crossing a brook, which the rain had suddenly swelled to a torrent. He had been left alone in the coach with only a foot-boy ; when a gentleman of the party on horseback, accidentally observing him, and aware of the danger, in spite of all opposition, carried him in his arms across the stream ; which proved so rapid and deep, that the coach was easily overturned, and both horses and riders hurried violently

down the current, and with much difficulty saved themselves by swimming.

So soon as he was capable of receiving instruction, he was taught at home to write a very fair hand, and to speak French and Latin, by one of his father's chaplains, a Frenchman who resided in the house. He shewed a remarkable aptitude for learning, and his proficiency in these infant studies was greatly accelerated by his natural inclination for them; a disposition for which he was highly commended and caressed by his father. His desire of knowing the truth was only exceeded by his inflexible regard for it, both in his words and actions. So strict was his veracity, even at that early age, and in matters of trivial moment; and so contrary to his nature were falsehood and dissimulation, that his father often affirmed he never detected him in a lie in his whole life. Even those little arts and disguises that children often resort to, to conceal their faults, he utterly abhorred; and choose rather, at the hazard of punishment, to accuse himself, and confess his misconduct.

After he had resided more than a year at home, his father, anxious to improve his studies, and preferring a public to a domestic education, resolved to send him, with his elder brother Francis, to Eton, then much resorted to by the young nobility; and to put them under the care of Sir Henry Wotton, Provost of that College, a man of learning and accomplishments, and a particular friend of his own; being attached to each other by a reciprocity of former civilities. They set sail from Youghall, and arrived safely at Bristol; not, however, without considerable danger of being captured by some Turkish pirates, who at that time

infested the Irish coast. From Bristol they repaired directly to Eton, and were committed to the care of Mr Harrison, then master of the school.

The extraordinary parts and capacity of the young philosopher, did not escape the observation of his judicious teacher, who seems to have possessed uncommon talents for exciting the mental powers of youth. He took care, accordingly, to foster and expand those promising blossoms; and to smooth the rugged path of knowledge by the most gentle and attractive artifices. He would occasionally dispense with his attendance at school, and instruct him privately in his chamber; give him play days unsolicited; or indulge him with balls, tops, and other implements of amusement. Sometimes he would commend others before him, to rouse his emulation; or bestow these praises upon himself, as an encouragement to greater exertions in deserving them. He was not merely careful to store his memory with words, but to instruct him in the true use and value of learning; and to consider study not so much as a task or a duty, but as the best way to purchase for himself future happiness and distinction in the world. By this affable and prudent treatment, he acquired that taste and relish for knowledge which never forsook him, and which grew up into those habits of assiduous investigation, for which he became afterwards so remarkable.

So strong was his passion for learning, even at that early age, that he eagerly devoted to it every leisure hour he could spare; and set himself to reading, with such intensity of application, that his master was sometimes obliged to force him out to take the necessary exercise for his health. The

book which pleased him most, "and which conjured up in him that unsatisfied appetite of knowledge, which continued as greedy as when it was first raised," was Quintus Curtius; which he happened accidentally to peruse. Of that author, he often spoke with gratitude, and used to say, that he owed more to Quintus Curtius than Alexander did; having derived more advantage from the history of that great monarch's conquest, than ever he did from the conquests themselves. There is obviously something in that fascinating biographer, that operates strongly on the aspiring minds of youth. The reading of this history, which created in Boyle that ardour which made him a scholar, is said to have made Charles Twelfth of Sweden a hero.

During his stay at school, he has recorded several accidents that happened to him, which it seems almost impossible he should have remembered, as he was then little more than nine years of age; and which must be accounted for, partly from the vivid apprehensions of the dangers he had escaped, and partly from his having a capacity so much superior to his years. By the sudden fall of the chamber where he lodged, after he had retired to bed, he was put in imminent peril of his life; and had certainly been stifled, or crushed to pieces by the chairs, books, and furniture of the room above, had not his bed protected him, and the sheets, in which he wrapped his head, allowed him to breathe without being suffocated by the dust and rubbish in which he was enveloped.

On another occasion, while riding, his horse taking fright, suddenly reared, and falling backward against a wall, had certainly crushed him under

its weight, had he not disengaged his foot from the stirrup, and thrown himself off, as it were by instinct, before it fell. A third time his life was endangered by the mistake of his medical attendant, who administered to him a wrong draught, which might have been attended with fatal consequences, had not its effects been counteracted, by having accidentally eaten of some sweetmeats. This error made him long after apprehend more from the physician than the disease ; and was probably one reason for his applying himself so inquisitively to the study of medicine. These extraordinary escapes he ascribed, not to chance, but to the hand of a watchful providence ; and he preserved the recollection of them, from the conviction that there would have been as much of ingratitude in passing them over in silence, as of moral blindness in not discerning and acknowledging them.

The only other afflictive occurrence that happened him while at school, was a severe attack from a tertian ague, which appeared to set all the arts and remedies of physic at defiance, and reduced him to a state of great debility. It was found necessary for a time to interrupt his studies, and allow him to divert his mind with books of amusing stories, or fabulous adventures, such as *Amadis de Gaul*, and other romances ; the effect of which was to unsettle and bewilder his thoughts, and fill his imagination with wandering and restless wishes. These stimulants, he was of opinion, did him more prejudice, than all the advantage they would have done him, had they effected his recovery ; for he long found it difficult to apply his attention to any thing, or recall his thoughts from the pursuit of romantic and visionary objects.

As a likely expedient for reclaiming his mind, and curbing the roving wildness of his volatile fancy, he turned his thoughts to the study of mathematics, especially the more laborious operations of algebra; a remedy not more effectual than extraordinary. That novels and adventures should have dissipated his melancholy and his imagination, was quite natural; but that a boy of his years should not only have discovered the fascination by which he had been misled, but have sought for an antidote in the extraction of cube roots, and algebraical solutions, is altogether remarkable, and a proof of that wonderful energy and resolution of mind which he possessed, even from his infancy.

The obstinate ague, which neither physic, mathematics, nor romance could expel, was cured by an accident, or rather by the mere force of imagination. His nurse having a potion to administer, and aware of his aversion to medicine, exchanged the loathsome draught for syrup of stewed prunes; and whether it was the mirth, occasioned by this innocent deceit, or whether nature had wrought her own cure, the disease vanished never to return; and he had much ado to maintain his gravity on finding the doctor ascribe his recovery to the efficacy of a potion he had never swallowed but in imagination.

He remained at Eton nearly four years, during which his studies were pursued with unabated alacrity, and with no interruption, except from sickness, and a few occasional excursions to visit his relations in England. From Eton he was removed to Stalbridge in Dorsetshire, an estate newly purchased by his father, who had lately taken up his residence there; and was desirous of

seeing him. He was always a favourite with the old Earl, whether from any peculiar resemblance he bore to him, or perhaps from a happy instinct of nature, which, while parents give their eldest children the greatest portion of their fortune, often secures to the youngest the largest share of their affections.

While here, he was committed to the charge of Mr Douch, a clergyman in the immediate neighbourhood, and one of his father's chaplains. With him he was chiefly employed in renewing his acquaintance with the Latin, which he had partially forgotten ; having spent his last year at school, rather in acquiring the more solid parts of knowledge, than in studying words ; which did not much consort with his disposition. Besides, having lost his former master, he had been deprived of those encouragements that had subdued his aversion to classical studies ; and had abandoned his Terence and his grammar, to read in history the gallant actions of those heroes, who were the glory of their own country, and the wonder of succeeding ages.

By the civility and attention of his reverend tutor, he speedily recovered his knowledge of the Roman tongue ; so far that he could read it with ease, and express himself readily in prose, and began to be no mean adept in artificial hexameters. But though he was naturally addicted to poetry, and felt no small delight in the conversation of the Muses, he never cultivated his talents in that way ; not that he undervalued this elegant accomplishment, but because, in his travels, he had fallen out of acquaintance with the ancient poets, and never after could find time to redeem his losses. Yet in his idle hours, he wrote verses both in French, Latin,

and English, most of which, when he came of age, were committed to the flames. He acquired, however, some skill in music, both vocal and instrumental, though he did not prosecute the study.

About the same time, he began to read and interpret, with a Frenchman, the Universal History, written in Latin. This foreigner, whose name was Marcombes, to whom the family of Boyle owed many and singular obligations, and who had great merit in training more than one generation of this noble line, had newly arrived in England with the Lords Broghill and Kinelmeaky, with whom he had travelled as tutor for three years; and had acquitted himself so satisfactorily, that the Earl entrusted him with the sole care and education of his younger sons.

In the autumn of 1638, he attended his father to London, where he remained till the marriage of his brother Francis with Miss Elizabeth Killigrew, one of the Queen's maids of honour; and within four days after, the two brothers were sent on their travels to the continent, under their new governor, Mr Marcombes. Embarking at Rye about the end of October, they proceeded, by Dieppe and Rouen, to Paris, where they stayed only a very short time, and took their departure for Lyons. After seeing this emporium of trade and merchandise, they crossed the lofty mountains of the Savoy for Geneva, which they reached in three days. This little commonwealth was an object of peculiar attraction, having been the scene of many political struggles, and the cradle of the reformed religion. Here also their instructions directed them to remain, and pursue their studies. They were lodged in the house of their governor, whose wife and family resided in the town.

The branches of education to which he chiefly applied himself, were rhetoric and logic ; particularly mathematics, with its subordinate sciences, for which he had already acquired a strong predilection. Under the tuition of Mr Marcombes, his improvement was rapid. He not only taught him the theory of geometry, but the application also ; the most useful parts of arithmetic, the doctrine of the sphere, that of the globe, and fortification. There was in his pupil's temper this singularity, that as soon as he became acquainted with any science, he was for applying it to some use ; and therefore the practical parts of trigonometry delighted him much ; and fortification, instead of being considered as a study, appeared to him a most pleasant amusement. Geography was a kind of travelling upon paper ; astronomy, a voyage to the heavens ; and so of other sciences, which, instead of being reputed a labour, were to him a delightful recreation ; and very often proved both his business and his diversion in his travels. In these notions he was led on, and sustained by his governor, who appears to have been a man of great parts as well as prudence, and to have understood well the art of educating youth.

To improve his body as well as his mind, he was instructed in the accomplishments of fencing and dancing ; the former of which exercises he never much affected, and the latter he utterly contemned. By a total discontinuance of his native tongue, he soon acquired a skill and readiness in French, somewhat uncommon to strangers ; which used in all his writings while abroad, as being the language in which he could express himself best.

But the most remarkable occurrence that hap-

pened during his stay at Geneva, was the revival of his religious impressions, which, it appears, were beginning to subside; partly, as he himself hints, from mixing with gay companions, and partly from his mind being so wholly engrossed in literary pursuits. His inclinations were ever virtuous, and his life irreproachable; and though he was not a stranger to the passions incident to youth, yet their importunities always met with a denial. This blamelessness of moral conduct, however, seems to have acted as an opiate to his conscience, and diverted his thoughts from aspiring to higher attainments in piety.

One immediate occasion of awakening his reflections on this subject, was a violent thunder-storm, which came on about dead of night, and roused him in terror from his sleep, with such loud and frightful peals, attended with flashes of lightning so frequent and dazzling, "that he began to imagine them the sallies of that fire that must consume the world." His apprehensions began to prefigure the day of judgment to be at hand, while the trembling consciousness of his unprepared condition, led him to the resolution of devoting the remainder of his life, should it be spared, to greater vigilance and attention on the subject of religion. When morning came, and a serene cloudless sky returned, he renewed and ratified his determination so solemnly, that from that day he dated his conversion. Nor did his resolutions vanish when the danger was past; for although fear, and he was ashamed to make the confession, was the first occasion of his vow, yet he took care, by his subsequent conduct, to convince the world that he owed not his more deliberate consecration of him-

self to piety, to any less noble motive than that of its own excellence.

Another incident happened about the same time, which, concurring with his sensitive imagination, and his naturally grave disposition, tended to distract him with other religious perplexities, and set him upon a more serious and inquisitive examination of the truth. From Geneva he had made some excursions to visit the interesting districts of Savoy and Dauphiny; and while at Grenoble, his curiosity led him to view those wild mountains where Bruno, founder of the Carthusian Monks, lived in solitude, and where the principal Abbey of that order was seated. The local peculiarities of this romantic monastery, together with the strange stories and pictures he found there of Bruno, so wrought upon his fancy, "suggesting such strange and hideous thoughts, and such distracting doubts of some of the fundamentals of Christianity, that though his looks did little betray his thoughts, nothing but the forbiddenness of self-dispatch hindered him from acting it." These impressions continued many months; and though he afterwards looked upon them rather as temptations to be suppressed, than doubts to be resolved; yet they would now and then, as he confessed, like fleeting clouds, darken the clearest serenity of his peace.

All this, however, instead of having any bad effects, was productive of the happiest results; and like many other seeming evils, was designed to work together for his good. From these anxieties, he derived the advantage of being more firmly grounded in his religion, and having his peace of mind satisfactorily established; "for," to use his own words, "the perplexity his doubts had

created, obliged him, in order to remove them, to be seriously inquisitive of the truth of the very fundamentals of Christianity; and to hear what both Greeks and Jews, and the chief sects of Christians, could allege for their several opinions; that so, though he believed more than he could comprehend, he might not believe more than he could prove; and not owe the stedfastness of his faith, to so poor a cause as the ignorance of what might be objected against it."

He thought there was little credit in having even a good religion by inheritance; or thinking it the best, because it was generally received, rather than embrace it, because it may be proved to be the best; and that there could not be a greater folly than to neglect any diligence that might prevent mistakes, where it was the greatest of miseries to be deceived; for of all things religion was the worst to be taken upon trust, and no man deserved to find the true one, who did not care to examine whether or not it was so. How well he acted upon this maxim himself, the whole history of his life shews. Philosophy, through all its provinces, became with him an engine for promoting religion; and to this pious application he made all those valuable truths subservient, which he discovered while analyzing the organic elements of matter, and studying the book of Nature by the light of the chemist's furnace.

Considering the time when this controversy in his mind took place, being then but in his fourteenth year, and the ordinary carelessness or incapacity of youth, in regard to any matter of importance, there might perhaps be some grounds to suspect the truth, or ridicule the solemnity of so extraordinary an occurrence; but the uncommon

precocity of his talents, the strength and clearness of his judgment, his extensive knowledge, of which abundant proofs exist in the letters he wrote at this time to his father,—all plainly shew his capacity, even at that early season, to prosecute such arduous inquiries ; and to enter, with a perfect understanding of the subject, into the deepest disputes of revealed religion. And whatever construction may be put upon the matter, one fact is at least certain, that these impressions, however premature, or casual in their origin, were permanent in their consequences ; and that all his subsequent investigations only tended the more to increase his veneration, and confirm his belief.

In September 1641, having spent a year and three quarters at Geneva, he departed towards Italy ; through Lausanne, Zurich, and Soleure, traversed the greater part of Lombardy, and saw whatever was curious in Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, Vicenza, Padua, and Venice, where he remained some time ; greatly delighted with the constant variety of objects, and the vast concourse of foreign nations resorting thither for trade. From Venice he took the route through Bologna, and Ferrara, to Florence, and there spent the winter. Here part of his time was employed in acquiring the Italian language, in which he quickly attained a native accent, and knowledge enough to understand both books and men, though he never was able to speak it so fluently as French.

The rest of his spare hours were devoted to reading modern history, “ and the new paradoxes of the great star-gazer Galileo,” whose ingenious books, he remarks, were confuted, because no other argument was capable, by a decree of Rome, which

extended the doctrine of infallibility equally to points in philosophy as in religion, and seemed afraid to have the stability of that earth called in question, on which superstition had erected her universal empire. It was during Mr Boyle's residence in this city, that Galileo died, after having suffered much from the reproaches and severities of the Church. Here also he had an opportunity of witnessing the dissipation and gross licentiousness which prevailed during the carnival; and though his curiosity sometimes led him to be present at exhibitions which cannot be named, he always maintained his unblemished character; professing "that he never found any such enemies against them, as they were against themselves, the impudent nakedness of vice clothing itself with a deformity which description cannot reach, and the worst of epithets do but flatter."

In March, next year, he quitted Florence for Rome, where he arrived after a journey of five days. Here he passed for a Frenchman, in order to see more conveniently the numerous rarities of that celebrated city, and to avoid the intrusions and importunities of the English Jesuits. Under this disguise, he visited every thing most deserving of notice; and among other curiosities "he had the fortune to see the Pope at Chapel, with the Cardinals, who, severally appearing mighty princes in that assembly, looked like common friars; and here, he tells us, he could not choose but smile to see a young churchman, after the service ended, upon his knees carefully with his feet, sweep into his handkerchief, the dust his Holiness's gouty feet had, by treading on it, consecrated, as if it had been some miraculous relic." The Pope, he observed,

he never found less valued than in Rome ; nor his religion more fiercely disputed against him than in Italy ; and therefore it was not surprising he should forbid the sight of Rome to Protestants, since nothing could more confirm them in their religion. After a short stay in that far-famed capital, he returned to Florence, thence to Pisa, Leghorn, and so by sea to Genoa.

Having thus made the tour of Italy, he returned through the country of Nice to France, and arrived at Antibes, one of the frontier towns. Here he narrowly escaped suffering for his contempt of a superstitious ceremony, in refusing to take off his hat in compliment to a crucifix. From Antibes he proceeded by land to Marseilles, where he expected bills of exchange. But instead of pecuniary supply, he received letters from his father, in May 1642, giving a melancholy account of the rebellion in Ireland ; and that with great difficulty he had procured them £250, to bear their expenses home. This money, however, they never received, from the faithlessness of the person to whom the remittance was intrusted. In this destitute condition, and in a foreign country, they were brought by means of Mr Marcombes' assistance, to Geneva, where, by reason of the confusions at home, they waited two years in expectation of supplies ; and at last were necessitated to take up some jewellery on the credit of their governor, which they sold from place to place ; and with the money thus raised, they continued their journey to England, where they arrived towards the middle of 1644.

On his arrival, which was unexpected to all his relations, Mr Boyle found his father had been dead nearly twelve months ; and though he

was amply provided for by the bequest of the manor of Stalbridge, and some other considerable estates in Ireland, yet, from the unsettled state of the country, it was some time before he could command any money, or get possession of his legacies, and was obliged to take up his residence with his sister, Lady Ranelagh, with whom he lodged upwards of four months. It was by accident he found her out, but it proved a lucky accident for his own future happiness, as well as for the interests of science; for had he not been detained in this agreeable family, he had certainly gone into the army, where his principles and his morals ran some hazard of being contaminated; "as the generality of those he would have been obliged to converse with, were very debauched, and apt, as well as inclinable, to make others so." Through the interest of his brother, Lord Broghill, and the Viscountess Ranelagh, he obtained protection for his estates in both kingdoms, as well as leave to return to France for a short time, on business of importance; probably to settle his arrears with Mr Marcombes.

In the month of March 1646, he retired to his manor at Stalbridge, where he mostly resided for upwards of four years. He made excursions sometimes to London, sometimes to Oxford; and in February 1647, he made a short voyage to Holland; partly to visit that country, and partly to accompany his brother Francis; and it was this circumstance, probably, that has misled some of his biographers to suppose he had studied at the University of Leyden. While at Stalbridge, he applied himself with incredible industry to studies of various kinds, as ethics, on which he composed a treatise,

mechanics, husbandry, but particularly to natural philosophy and chemistry. Even during his travels, his application had never relaxed, and he would not lose a vacant moment, "if they were walking down a hill, or upon a rough road, he would read all the way; and when they came at night to their inn, he would still be studying, till supper, and frequently proposed such difficulties as he met with to his governor." This passion continued with unabated vigour; and it is amazing to find what vast progress he made, not only in many branches of literature, but in some that have been always held the most difficult and abstruse.

In politics he meddled as little as possible, yet his interest, his humanity, and his piety, would not suffer him to be an unconcerned spectator of those miseries under which his country then groaned; and in some of his letters at this period, he has many pertinent remarks on the consequences of the war, and the factious divisions that had sprung up both in Church and State. On scientific subjects he entered into a very extensive correspondence, which he afterwards maintained with some of the most learned and estimable characters of his time, till near the close of his life. He omitted no opportunity of becoming acquainted with persons distinguished for talents and learning, to whom he was in every respect a useful, steady, and generous assistant, and communicated freely on all points of knowledge.

Among those early friends with whom he held epistolary intercourse, were his tutor Mr Marcombes, Mr Francis Tallents, afterwards known for his laborious work, entitled "Chronological Tables;" Mr Samuel Hartlib, a learned Pole,

mentioned by Miltonth in his Tractate on Education, as "a person, ^{at} hither by some good providence from a ^{far} country, to be the occasion and incitement of great good to this island:" Dr, afterwards Sir William Petty, Dr John Beale, and many other celebrated characters. In his correspondence, the subject of religion is frequently alluded to; and young and ardent as he then was, he gave undoubted proofs of his candour and Christian charity, in a letter to Mr John Dury, famous for his attempts to reconcile the Lutherans and Calvinists. "It has long been," (says he), "my wonder and my grief, to see such comparatively petty differences in judgment make such wide breaches, and vast divisions in affection. It is strange that men should rather be quarrelling for a few trifling opinions, wherein they dissent, than to embrace one another for those many fundamental truths wherein they agree. For my part, I could never observe in any church government such transcendent excellency, as could oblige me either to bolt heaven against, or open Newgate for, all those who believe they may be saved under another."

He was also one of the first members of that small but learned body of men, who, when all academical studies were interrupted by the civil wars, resolved, about the year 1645, to withdraw themselves from those melancholy scenes, and held private meetings, first in London, and afterwards at Oxford, for the purpose of canvassing subjects of natural knowledge, upon the plan of experiment recommended by Lord Bacon. This little society, styled by him the Invisible College, and by themselves the Philosophical College, were

incorporated by charter after the restoration, and distinguished, as they well deserved, by the title of the Royal Society. It is certainly no small honour to our philosopher, that, when he was so young a man, scarcely twenty, his merits and knowledge gained him admittance among persons the most distinguished for the acuteness of their understanding, and the singularity as well as extent of their science.

His great diligence and application were so much the more surprising and commendable, as at this time his health was very much disordered by frequent attacks of the stone, a disease to which he was extremely subject, and which his sedentary life probably contributed to aggravate. But notwithstanding this, and the frequent interruptions he met with from business, visits to his relations, &c. he never suffered his thoughts to be distracted, or his designs to be broken off, by any of these accidents; as appears by his having completed three regular and excellent pieces before he had reached his twentieth year, *viz.* his *Seraphic Love*, his *Essay on Mistaken Modesty*, and his *Free Discourse against Customary Swearing*.

His increasing reputation encouraged other learned men to cultivate his friendship and patronage; and in 1651, Dr Nathaniel Highmore, an eminent physician, dedicated to him his "*History of Generation*," a work then much esteemed. "You have so enriched your tender years," says the dedicator, in language which was here no flattery, "with such choice principles of the best sort, and managed them to the greatest advantage, that you stand both a pattern and wonder to our nobility and gentry; many of whom have so spent

their precious minutes, that they are scarce able to account for one, or spend an hour but in vice. But you have made a better and far nobler choice. You have not thought your blood and descent debased, because married to the arts. You stick not to trace nature in her most intricate paths ; to torture her to a confession, though with your own sweat and treasure obtained."

Besides his other performances, Mr Boyle, who never remitted his religious pursuits, had about this time, as appears from several documents, directed his studies to the perusal and examination of the Scriptures in the original tongues, in which he made great proficiency. His " Essay on the Scripture," written in 1652, at intervals and under many disadvantages, is a very flattering specimen of his talents as a biblical critic, and contains some judicious thoughts concerning the English translation of the Bible ; which, excellent as it was, he imagined might in some places be corrected and improved, from the great increase of light which the researches of critics and antiquaries had thrown on many texts. The pains he himself took to acquire the sacred languages he never grudged. " For my part, (says he) reflecting often on David's generosity, who would not offer, as a sacrifice to the Lord, that which cost him nothing, I esteem no labour lavished that illustrates or endears to me that divine book ; and think it no treacherous sign that God loves a man, when he inclines his heart to love the Scriptures, where the truths are so precious and important, that the purchase must, at least, deserve the price. And I confess myself to be none of those lazy persons, who seem to expect to obtain from God a knowledge of the won-

ders of his book, upon as easy terms as Adam did a wife, by sleeping soundly."

This same year he went over to Ireland to visit and settle his estates in that kingdom; and next year the disordered state of that country obliged him to perform the journey a second time. Here he remained till midsummer, 1654, though his residence was by no means agreeable to him, as he wanted the means and opportunity of prosecuting his favourite researches. In one of his letters he styles it "a barbarous country; where chemical spirits were so misunderstood, and chemical instruments so unprocurable, that it was hard to have any hermetic thoughts in it." He therefore exercised himself in making anatomical dissections, in which he was assisted by his friend Dr William Petty, physician to the army, and one of the most extraordinary men of his time.

From their joint studies and conversation he received great pleasure, as well as much new information. "I satisfied myself (says he) of the circulation of the blood; and have seen more of the variety and contrivances of nature, and the majesty and wisdom of her author, than all the books I ever read in my life could give me convincing notions of." He made also strict inquiries after the minerals which Ireland afforded; and though he could meet with few who had either skill or curiosity in that way, yet silver ore was brought to him, which was found upon one of his brother's estates, and which, upon trial, was estimated to be worth between thirty and forty pounds a ton.

In June, 1654, he returned to England, and put in execution a design he had formed of settling at

Oxford, partly for better enjoying the society of his ingenious friends, and partly for the conveniences which that place afforded for pursuing his favourite studies in peace, and to greater advantage. In this academical retreat, he spent his time to the greatest satisfaction; being surrounded by a number of learned friends, who resorted thither chiefly for the same reasons he had done.

Among these members of the Invisible College, who thus transferred the scene of their investigations to Oxford, were Dr Wilkins, who had married Cromwell's sister, Sir Christopher Wren, Drs Wallis, Ward, Willis, &c. men too celebrated to require any particular enumeration of their merits; being no less eminent for their genius than for their unwearied assiduity to cultivate and promote the most useful parts of literature. They held regular meetings at each other's lodgings, often in Mr Boyle's apartments, in which they conferred chiefly on philosophical subjects; and being satisfied that there was no certain way of arriving at any competent knowledge, unless they made a variety of experiments upon natural bodies, in order to discover what phenomena they would produce, they pursued that method by themselves with great industry, and then communicated their discoveries to each other.

This was a society and course of life exactly suited to the inclinations of Mr Boyle. With his solid attainments in mathematical and chemical knowledge, he soon detected the absurdity of Aristotle's philosophy in explaining the phenomena of nature, which had so long domineered in the schools; and rejected it as a mere system of words, that could never make any man more intelligent.

The philosophy of Descartes had begun to attract the belief and admiration of the world; but as he was resolved to acquiesce in no single man's hypothesis, and to draw no conclusions from premises in natural science which he could not actually verify himself, he long refrained from reading the works of that acute and elegant author, lest the ingenuity of his principles, whose celebrity was spreading over all Europe, might bias his mind in making fact and experiment the only interpreters of nature. And so convinced was he of the utility of such pursuits to mankind, even as matters of amusement, that he used every endeavour to persuade the nobility and gentry of the nation, who had means and leisure for such studies, to follow his example, and engage themselves in inquiries which would divert them from those frivolous and criminal pleasures with which most of them occupied themselves; and would make them not only better Christians, but more useful members of society.

It was during his residence at Oxford, that he invented the air-pump, which was improved and rendered more perfect, by the ingenious Robert Hook, who was employed by Mr Boyle as his chemical assistant, and afterwards Professor of Geometry in Gresham College. By means of this admirable engine, he performed experiments which immediately placed him in the first rank of philosophers; and made such discoveries as have gone very far to enable him, and those who succeeded him, especially Dr Priestly, to form a just theory of the air. By this he demonstrated its elasticity; and that property alone led to the elucidation of many more. He began also to compose histories

of its particular qualities, all founded upon experiments or observations, of which he kept exact registers, in order to leave such materials as might serve future ages for the basis of a more perfect hypothesis.

The ingenuity of his contrivances, and the great importance of their results, together with his extreme modesty and candour in reasoning from them, are objects for our respect and admiration even at present, when the true method of philosophising is universally understood, and the effects of the weight and elasticity of the air are regularly taught as a part of education. But how much more must have been the admiration of philosophers, when those discoveries were first substituted in place of the crude theories of earlier times, which left the bewildered inquirer to grope his way in the regions of conjecture, and to take for indubitable proofs, the abstract notions and chimerical inventions of men.

But philosophy, and inquiries into nature, though they engaged his attention deeply, did not occupy it entirely, since he continued to pursue his theological studies. In his criticisms of the sacred Scriptures, he derived peculiar advantages from the assistance of several of the most profound Oriental scholars which this country ever produced, then resident at Oxford, *viz.* Dr Pococke, Mr Hyde, Mr Clark, and Dr Barlow, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, a man of prodigious reading, who knew what the fathers, canonists, or schoolmen had said upon any question in divinity, or any case of conscience, and was with all his accomplishments, very communicative of his knowledge.

To these were added, a correspondence now be-

come very extensive ; particularly with Mr Oldenburg, a German, afterwards Secretary to the Royal Society ; Dr Beale, a learned divine ; Mr Evelyn, the famous naturalist ; Dr Pell, and Dr Wallis, both first rate mathematicians ; the latter of whom dedicated to Mr Boyle, his learned book " On the Cycloid," in which he notices his eminent skill in divinity, in the sacred and ancient, as well as modern languages, and his incessant cultivation of true philosophy, by experiments of all kinds. " In physics," (says he), " medicine, chemistry, and anatomy, you prosecute nature as it were with fire and sword ; exploring her inmost recesses by the light of the artist's furnace, and compelling her, by your severe and repeated interrogatories, to confess the truth, and furnish the secret key that unlocks her own mysteries."

As a proof of his great regard for the science of theology, Mr Boyle becoming acquainted with the circumstances of the learned Dr Sanderson, who had lost all his preferments from his attachment to the royal cause, conferred upon him an annuity of £50, a-year ; with a condition or recommendation annexed, that he should apply himself to writing Cases of conscience, explaining the nature of conscience, and how far its obligations extend ; a useful inquiry in that age of controversial divinity, when private opinions were made the ground of dissension, and revolt from all established order. In consequence of this, the Doctor published a Treatise on the subject, in Latin, consisting of ten lectures, which were delivered at Oxford in 1647, and addressed to his generous patron, in an elaborate dedication.

After the Restoration, Mr Boyle was treated by

his Majesty with great civility and respect; and with much affectionate esteem by the two leading ministers, the Chancellor Clarendon, and the Earl of Southampton, Lord High Treasurer. Clarendon, whose attachment to the English Church was carried even to bigotry and intolerance, was very importunate with Mr Boyle to enter into holy orders, being persuaded that his noble family, his extraordinary talents, and above all, his unblemished reputation, would reflect honour on the profession; and were deserving of the highest ecclesiastical preferments; more especially at a time when the reputation of Episcopacy had been greatly impaired by imprudent severities, which had thrown many of the most learned divines into the ranks of the sectaries.

To the Church as a profession, Mr Boyle had no disinclination, and was not so attached to his secular projects and concerns, but he could willingly have abandoned them. Besides, the hope of being serviceable to the order, made considerable impression on his mind, and was a much stronger motive than any prospect of its dignities and emoluments. But on pondering the matter with due attention, he was inclined to reject the proposal; being persuaded, that in his present situation he might extend his services to religion, and with better effect, since whatever he wrote on the subject, would then have so much the greater weight, as coming from a layman. He considered likewise that in point of fortune, and character, he needed no accessions; and indeed he had no desire for greater rank or wealth. These reasons, while they set his disinterested piety, and his conscientious regard for justice and honour, in:

the most amiable light, ought to give greater weight, and afford the highest sanction to all that he has written in behalf of religion. He preferred, therefore, to devote himself exclusively to philosophical studies, in such a manner as might best illustrate the truths of revelation.

It was about this time that he published his "New Experiments, touching the Spring of the Air, and its Effects." These were chiefly the results of the discoveries he had made by means of his pneumatic pump; in which he demonstrated the elastic power of the air; shewed that the strange effects which the ancients ascribed to the imaginary abhorrence of a vacuum, arose merely from the native self-expansion of the atmosphere; explained the influence which air has upon flame, smoke, and vapours; what operation it had upon liquors, as oil, wine, vinegar, &c. its gravity and expansion under water; its effects on the vibrations of pendulums, and the propagation of sounds; and lastly, the nature of respiration, illustrated by trials made on several kinds of animals. This work was translated into Latin, and drew him into a controversy with Fransicus Linus, and the notorious Hobbes of Malmsbury, whose objections he refuted in an able "Defence of his Doctrines," with equal candour, clearness and civility. Another piece, written as early as 1648, was at this time published, entitled, "Seraphic Love, or some Motives and Incentives to the Love of God." This was, it appears, only a fragment of a larger treatise on the passion of love in general, but which the author thought proper to suppress.

The fame of his great abilities had now extended itself beyond the bounds of his native country; so

that the Grand Duke of Tuscany, a prince of distinguished learning, became extremely desirous of holding a correspondence with him, and requested Mr Southwell, then resident at Florence, and afterwards President of the Royal Society, to convey to him his wishes to that effect, in a letter dated October 10th, 1660.

In the two following years, there appeared his "Physiological Essays," which extended his reputation as a naturalist; the "Sceptical Chemist," a curious and valuable treatise, shewing the errors of chemical theories on the qualities and elementary principles of bodies. In these publications, mention is made of other treatises, as in a state of great forwardness, which were lost a few years after, in the great fire of London.

In 1662, a grant of the forfeited impropriations in Ireland was obtained from the King, in Mr Boyle's name, without his knowledge. These he applied to the support of religion and learning, by relieving the poor in those places, contributing to the maintenance of ministers there, and promoting such other benevolent works, as time and occasion might require. He interposed likewise, in favour of the Corporation for propagating the gospel in New England, and was very instrumental in obtaining a decree in the Court of Chancery, for restoring to them an estate of more than £300, a year, of which they had violently been deprived. This Corporation, having expired in law at the Restoration, was again revived by express charter, and Mr Boyle appointed governor; and in the duties of this honourable trust, he manifested a degree of diligence and activity, that proved in various respects highly beneficial to the purposes of that

body. Though he was naturally addicted to a private and retired life, yet whenever the cause of religion, virtue, or knowledge required it, his interest and endeavours were never wanting, and rarely employed but with success.

In the year 1663, the Royal Society being incorporated by Charles II., Mr Boyle was nominated one of the Council, and as he might justly be reckoned among the founders of that learned body, so he continued through life one of its most useful and industrious members. To the indefatigable exertions of these Invisible philosophers, science was much indebted; and when the happy opportunity arrived of obtaining for their studies the sanction and authority of Government, they were not slow to avail themselves of it; "finding the hearts of their countrymen enlarged by their joys at the King's return, and fitted for any noble proposition, they began to imagine greater things, and to bring out experimental knowledge from those retreats in which it had long hid itself, to take its part in the triumphs of that universal jubilee."

Every year now afforded fresh proofs of Mr Boyle's unremitting diligence, and the store of observations and experiments he made. In June 1663, he published "Some Considerations, touching the Usefulness of Experimental Natural Philosophy." These were followed by "Experiments and Considerations, touching Colours, with Observations on a Diamond that shines in the dark;" a treatise which abounds with curious and useful remarks on the hitherto unexplained doctrine of light and colours, and may be said to have led the way to the great Newton, whose mighty genius

gave the most convincing analysis of this subject. His "Considerations on the Style of the Holy Scriptures" appeared next. This was only an extract from a larger work, entitled "An Essay on Scripture," which was published after his death, by his friend Mr Pett, Attorney General for Ireland.

In 1664, he was elected into the Company of the Royal Mines, and was all this year much taken up in the prosecution of various good designs, especially in the affairs of the Corporation for propagating the gospel in New England; which probably was the reason he did not send abroad any works, either in religion or philosophy. But next year, he published his "Occasional Reflections on several Subjects," addressed to his sister, the Viscountess of Ranelagh, under the name of Sophronia. They were written when he was very young; some upon trivial occasions, but all displaying wit and learning, and a remarkable strain of moral and pious reflection. This work exposed him to the only severe censure that ever was passed upon him. Butler, the witty author of *Hudibras*, wrote a satirical imitation of its style, under the title of "An Occasional Reflection, on Dr Charlton's feeling a Dog's Pulse, at Gresham College." It was also attacked by Dean Swift, who wrote, in ridicule, a "Pious Meditation on a Broomstick,"—a piece of indecent buffoonery, in which he did not shew a just regard to the interests of religion, any more than to the character of Mr Boyle. Being written in early life, and before he had acquired a correct taste, these effusions might perhaps afford room for burlesque imitation; but this is of very little importance to his fame as a man and a philosopher, which is established on a

very different basis. But what may be regarded as of some literary interest is, that Swift is said to have borrowed from a passage in this treatise the first hint of his *Gulliver's Travels*.

Various small pieces of his were published in the *Transactions of the Royal Society* this year; besides a very important work, under the title of "*New Experiments and Observations upon Cold; with an Examen of Mr Hobbes's Doctrine of Cold.*" This work, as it was justly admired at the time, so it has since been held in great esteem, and may be said to have been the first publication that gave inquisitive men any real light into the subjects which are there examined. The facts and observations recorded in this *Essay*, form no inconsiderable part of the knowledge which yet obtains upon various phenomena of nature, in a department far from being completely investigated. The author presents us with an account of the capacity of bodies for retaining or communicating cold,—the way to estimate the degrees of cold,—how to measure its intensity when produced by art, beyond that employed in ordinary freezing,—how to ascertain the changes produced in water, between the greatest heat in summer, and the first degree of winter cold,—how to discover its different temperatures in different regions,—the effects of cold as to preserving or destroying the texture of bodies, and how their expansion and contraction are caused by freezing,—whether any specific virtues of plants are lost by the process of congelation and thawing,—an inquiry into the prodigious force of water when frozen,—how far cold descends in earth and water,—the solidity of ice explained, and the strength of the adhesion of its parts; together with

a variety of other curious experiments too numerous to be here particularized.

The excellence of his character had gained him such universal respect, that his Majesty, out of the esteem and affection he had for him, unasked and unsolicited, nominated him to the provostship of Eton College. This honourable and lucrative office, the fittest for him in the kingdom, he thought proper to decline, contrary to the advice of his friends. He alleged several reasons for this refusal; chiefly because he thought the duties of that employment might interfere with his studies, and he was unwilling to quit that course of life, which he found, by experience, so suitable to his temper and constitution; and, above all, he was unwilling to enter into holy orders, which he judged to be a necessary qualification for it.

About this time he was involved, by being appealed to, in a controversy which made a considerable noise in the world; the decision of which, from the high reputation he had gained, was universally expected from him. The case was that of Mr Valentine Greatraks, the Hohenlohe of his age, who claimed the peculiar gift of curing diseases by the touch or stroking of his hand. This extraordinary person, whose miraculous powers have procured him a niche in our general histories, was by birth an Irishman, of good family, and competent fortune, of a serious or rather melancholy temperament, and about thirty-seven years of age; he had a strange impulse on his mind that "God had given him the blessing of curing the king's evil; which his wife, who was a notable woman, and had applied herself to the study of surgery and physic, treated as a fancy."

Mr Greatraks, however, made the experiment ; and performed such wonders, that the Bishop's Court at Lismore cited him to their bar ; and having no license for practising, he was prohibited to lay hands on any for the future. In January, 1666, he was invited to England, by the Earl of Orrery, in hopes of his being able to cure the Viscountess Conway, residing in Warwickshire, of an inveterate headach ; and though he failed in this attempt, his performances both there and in London, became so extraordinary, that Mr Henry Stubbe, a voluminous writer, thought fit to publish a treatise on the subject, giving an account of these miracles, and addressed to Mr Boyle. In this piece, Mr Stubbe, after detailing the character and personage of this gifted physician, whom he represents as modest and devout, of a graceful presence, and having " in his eyes and mien a vivacity and sprightliness that is nothing common ;" lays down this position, " That God had bestowed upon Mr Greatraks a peculiar temperament, or composed his body of some particular ferments, the effluvia whereof, being introduced by friction, should restore the temperament of the debilitated parts, reinvigorate the blood, and dissipate all heterogeneous ferments out of the bodies of the diseased, by the eyes, nose, mouth, hands, and feet."

These supernatural pretensions, together with their astonishing effects, occasioned a great controversy, in which several very eminent and learned virtuosi espoused his cause ; though others were disposed to attribute all his wonderful performances to the mere efficacy of friction. Both parties addressed themselves to Mr Boyle, who, in a hasty reply to Mr Stubbe's pamphlet, gave his opinion

of the whole affair, in such a way as reflects the greatest credit on his prudence and his learning. It is a very long letter, and though written in the compass of a single morning, is remarkably correct in diction, pertinent in its observations, and abounding with many curious facts to illustrate his reasoning. Considered in a theological point of view, it shewed his extreme tenderness with regard to religion, and how jealous he was of admitting or countenancing any principles or opinions, that he thought might have a tendency to hurt or discredit it.

Though he admitted the possibility of miraculous gifts, since he found no cogent proof of their having ceased with the age of the apostles, and professed his readiness to be convinced of the cures in question, upon sufficient testimony; yet, when compared with those in Scripture, he found abundant reason, from the obvious disparity, to justify his scepticism. In the physical part of his letter, he does not deny that the touch of a hand, supposed to be endowed with healing virtues, may in some cases act as a specific in strengthening and invigorating nature; especially when the force of imagination is taken into account, which has of itself produced strange effects, and may have an interest in the recovery by occasioning some lucky commotion in the blood and spirits, upon which, amendment or recovery may sometimes ensue; as diseases are sometimes frightened away by a fit of passion, and some have been freed from the hiccough or ague, by being told some piece of feigned ill news.

In the present age it may perhaps be thought, that Mr Boyle ought to have laid more emphasis on the power of imagination over organized matter, and the

effects of animal magnetism, or enthusiasm, and rejected altogether the notion of supernatural influences; but it must be considered that he was deeply convinced of the truth of the miraculous gifts of the founders of Christianity; and was, moreover, from the infinity of his researches into natural causes, little disposed to reject facts and consequences, merely because they could not be immediately reconciled by analogy, to the small aggregate of human intelligence. His letter, therefore, was exactly such as might have been expected from such a man. Besides exhibiting his piety and candour, from which he was never known to depart, it is one of the clearest testimonies of his vast abilities and extensive information, that is anywhere extant. In this controversy, so near akin to ridicule, and so apt to excite party irritation, he conducted himself so worthily, that no censure was ever personally applied to him by any of the disputants.

In 1666, Dr John Wallis addressed to him his Hypothesis about the Flux and Reflux of the Sea; and the famous Dr Sydenham dedicated to him his Method of Curing Fevers. His own works of this year were, his "Hydrostatical Paradoxes," explaining the doctrine of the pressure of fluids; the distribution of water in pipes; and how it ascends in siphons and pumps, by the pressure of an external fluid, without supposing any abhorrence of a vacuum: and his "Origin of Forms and Qualities, according to the Corpuscular Philosophy, illustrated by experiments." In these he explodes the useless and imaginary notions of the schoolmen, and shews that what was anciently ascribed to the chimerical effects of substantial forms, and real quali-

ties, may result from the mere texture and position of parts in bodies; he lays down the foundations, and delivers the principles, of the mechanic philosophy, which he confirms by several very agreeable and instructive experiments. Besides these, a number of smaller pieces were published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of this year; all connected with natural inquiries; and which do equal honour to his ingenuity, the depth of his judgment, and his indefatigable pains in searching after truth.

In 1667, a very acrimonious attack was made against the Royal Society, by the admirers of Aristotle and the old philosophy, who, from its first institution, had taken the alarm, and affected to represent the views of many of its members, to be the destruction not only of true learning, but of religion itself. The great champion of the Aristotelians, was Mr Stubbe, mentioned above; but it is honourable to Mr Boyle, that even in the heat and invective of party zeal, notwithstanding the decided part he took in his writings, he was treated by the most violent of his antagonists with the utmost respect; and on his own part, he displayed a singular goodness of temper, in bearing with the passion and impertinence with which his learned associates were assailed. The utility of his writings which could not be doubted, was opposed as a most triumphant argument to the petulant charges of their adversaries. One of his friends who took a leading part in the controversy, observes, "that he alone had, even then, done enough to oblige all mankind, and to erect an eternal monument to his memory; so that had he lived in those days, when men godded their benefactors, he could not have missed one of the first places among their deified

mortals ; and that in his writings are to be found the greatest strength, and the sweetest modesty, the noblest discoveries, and the most generous self-denial, the profoundest insight into philosophy and nature, and the most devout and affectionate sense of God and religion."

Next year, Mr Boyle being resolved to settle in London, left Oxford, and removed to the house of his favourite sister, Lady Ranelagh, in Pall Mall ; to the great advantage of the philosophical world, and especially of the Royal Society ; as by this means his correspondence was rendered more effective, and men of research could more regularly enjoy his conversation, as he had set hours for receiving those who applied to him, either to desire his assistance, or communicate any new discovery in science. His correspondence at this time was very extensive, with persons of the greatest eminence, and most famous for learning in all parts of Europe ; with whom he stood as high in reputation, as among his own countrymen, and who were acquainted with his extraordinary merits through the Latin translations of his works, at that time the universal language of literary men.

His philosophical publications of this year were, " A Continuation of his Experiments on Air ; with a Discourse of the Atmospheres of Consistent Bodies ;" " A Discourse of Absolute Rest in Bodies ;" " An Invention to Estimate the Weight of Water ;" and " A Letter to Dr du Moulin ;" on his Translation of " The Devil of Mascon, or a True Relation of the chief things which an unclean Spirit did and said at Mascon in Burgundy ;"—a narrative which he was not altogether indisposed to believe, as it was attested to him by a learned and

intelligent traveller. Dr du Moulin, having a remarkable genius for Latin poetry, dedicated a collection of his performances to Mr Boyle, in which he commends his excellent talents for verse, and his particular relish for that kind of poetry which is devoted to religion.

In 1670, Mr Boyle published a book which occasioned much speculation, as it seemed to contain a vast treasure of new knowledge; and this too, grounded upon actual experiments, and arguments justly drawn from them, instead of that notional and conjectural philosophy which, in the beginning of the 17th century, had been so much in fashion. This was a collection of "Tracts about the Cosmical Qualities of Things, the Temperature of the Subterranean and Submarine Regions," &c. which are replete with the most interesting remarks on the internal constitution of physical bodies, the laws that regulate their motions and temperature, and the various discoveries which, with much labour and ingenuity, he had made, by following the footsteps of nature, and studying her operations in those dark and impenetrable recesses, which seem to lie beyond the reach of observation or experiment. He continued likewise to enrich the philosophical transactions with papers on various subjects. But amidst all these labours he was attacked, May 1671, with a severe paralytic distemper; which, however, was removed by a strict attention to regimen, and proper remedies.

From this period until the termination of his active and useful life, his researches were so numerous, and embraced such a variety of subjects, that the mere catalogue of his works would carry us

far beyond our limits. Of those relating to philosophical inquiries, may be mentioned as the most noted, "Considerations on the Usefulness of Experimental and Natural Philosophy; and Tracts of a Discovery of the Rarefaction of the Air; New Experiments touching the Condensation of Air by mere Cold, and its Compression without Mechanical Engines;" "Essay about the Origin and Virtue of Gems, with some Conjectures about the consistence of the Matter of Precious Stones;" "Tracts, containing New Experiments, touching the Relation between Flame and Air; An Hydrostatical Discourse about a Way of Weighing Water; New Experiments of the positive or relative levity of Bodies under Water; About the different pressure of heavy Solids and Fluids."

In 1673, appeared his "Essays on the strange Subtilty, great Efficacy, and determinate Nature of Effluviæ; with various experiments on Flame, the weighing of Igneous Corpuscles, the perviousness of Glass to Flame," &c. His communications to the Transactions this year were, "Some Observations about Shining Flesh, without any sensible putrefaction;" "Experiments on the Weight of the Atmosphere upon some Bodies in Water;" and "A Letter concerning Ambergris, and its being a vegetable production." He had also the honour of having the work of a distinguished foreigner dedicated to him, *viz.* the History of Nature, by Anthony le Grand, an eminent Cartesian philosopher, who applies to him the compliment which Averroes bestowed on Aristotle; that "Nature had formed him as an exemplar, or pattern of the highest perfection to which humanity can attain."

In 1674, he gave to the world another collection of Tracts, "On the Saltness of the Sea; the Moisture of the Air; the Natural and Preternatural State of Bodies, with a Dialogue on the Nature of Cold:" These were followed by his Tracts "On Suspensions about some hidden Qualities of the Air, with an Appendix, touching Celestial Magnets; Animadversions on Mr Hobbes's Problems of a vacuum; and a Discourse on the Cause of Attraction and Suction." The papers which he transmitted next year to the Society were, "On the Air-Bladders in Fishes; New Experiments on the Elasticity of the Air; and an Experimental Discourse of Quicksilver growing hot with Gold,"—a discovery then reckoned highly important, by establishing a controverted point in the Hermetic Philosophy; and which drew from Sir Isaac Newton a curious letter on the subject, cautioning the noble author to keep silence, until he should ascertain the consequences of a fact so favourable to the alchemists. The regard which Newton had for Mr Boyle, appears from another long letter which he wrote to him, explaining his sentiments upon one of the most abstruse points of philosophy, with respect to the etherial medium which in his Optics he proposes as the mechanical cause of gravitation.

In 1676, he published "Experiments, Notes, &c. about the Mechanical origin of particular Qualities;" in which he treats at considerable length, and with his wonted accuracy and perspicuity, of Alkalis and Acids, the mechanical origin of Heat and Cold, the production of Tastes, Odours, Volatility, Fixedness, Corrosive Action, Chemical Precipitation, Magnetism, and Electricity; besides two papers to the Society's Transactions, "On the Su-

perficial Figures of Fluids, in contact with each other." There was published also about this time at Geneva, a miscellaneous collection of his works in Latin, very inaccurate in the arrangement, and without the knowledge or consent of the author. Dr Cudworth, author of the *Intellectual System*, a few years after this, recommended him to have all his writings, which were become exceedingly numerous, translated into Latin, for the benefit of the learned world in general, and as affording the most secure basis for natural philosophy which had yet appeared.

In 1678, Mr Boyle's "Short Memorial of some Observations made upon an artificial Substance, that shines without any preceding illustration," was published in Hooke's *Cutlerian Lectures*: "An Historical Account of a Degradation of gold made by an Anti-elixir," appeared this year,—a treatise which made a very great noise at home and abroad, and is looked upon as one of the most remarkable pieces that ever fell from his pen; the facts contained in it would have appeared incredible, if they had been advanced by any other. It details a long and curious process, of two drachmas of purified gold being debased, by adding to it in a state of fusion, a minute portion of a brownish powder. The attention of chemists has been repeatedly directed to similar experiments, but the conjectures upon the phenomenon in question, have been wild and unsystematical. Whether these results made Mr Boyle a believer in the transmutation of metals, it is not easy to ascertain; but at all events this detracts nothing from the merits of the experiment, which is certainly one of the most extraordinary to be met with in the annals of chemis-

try. No one has attempted to imitate the process ; though there are not wanting a considerable number of instances which might lead to a more accurate and scientific investigation.

In 1680, he published "The Aerial Noctiluca, and a process of a factitious self-shining substance ; A New Lamp ; and Divers Experiments about the produceableness of chemical Substances." At the annual election of officers for the Royal Society this year, he was elected President,—an honour which he declined, from his peculiar tenderness of conscience with regard to the official oaths required to be taken. But he begged to assure them, that though he could not serve them in the honourable capacity they were pleased to think of for him, yet he hoped he should not be a useless member of that learned body ; but should manifest both his zeal for their work, and his sense of their favours.

Dr Burnet being at this time employed in compiling his History of the Reformation, Mr Boyle contributed very largely to the expense of publishing it ; as he was always ready to aid any undertaking which he conceived to be beneficial to the world, though from obvious and very honourable motives, the greater part of such charities were concealed. The same learned prelate afterwards transmitted to him from the Hague, the manuscript account of his travels, which he had drawn up in the form of letters addressed to Mr Boyle, who compliments him for his judicious remarks and reflections, which were fitted, he observes, "not a little to improve both a statesman, a critic, and a divine ; as well as to make the author pass for all three."

Among his works that appeared in 1681, and the following years, were his "Discourse of things above Reason, inquiring whether a philosopher should admit there are any such;" "New Experiments and Observations made upon the icy *Noc-tiuca*;" "A Continuation of Experiments on the Spring and Weight of the Air, made both in compressed and also in factitious Air, about Fire, Animals," &c.: "A Letter to Dr Beale, concerning Fresh Water made out of Sea Water:" "Memoirs of the Natural History of the Human Blood;" and "Experiments and Considerations about the Porosity of Bodies:" "Short Memoirs for the Natural History of Mineral Waters, with a great many curious experiments:" "An Essay on the great Effects of even languid and unheeded Motion, with an Appendix on some causes and effects of the Salubrity and Insalubrity of the Air,"—a treatise which was received with greater and more general applause than perhaps any of his others: "A Discourse on the Reconcilableness of Specific Medicines, to the Corpuscular Philosophy, with an Appendix on the advantages of the use of simple Medicines."

The only work of his that appeared in 1686, was his "Free Inquiry into the vulgarly received Notion of Nature," one of the most important and useful of his pieces, and which will always be admired and esteemed by such as have a true zeal for religion and intelligible philosophy. The following year produced his "Martyrdom of Theodora and Didymus," which he had drawn up in his youth; this was succeeded by a very curious and valuable work, "A Disquisition into the Final Causes of Natural Things, and with what caution a Naturalist should admit them."

In this piece, the author treats with great judgment and perspicuity, many of the deepest and most abstracted notions in philosophy and religion, so as to give satisfaction to the candid, without running into any offensive speculations; which is a felicity, that, in cases of this nature, has very rarely attended the writings of any, except Mr Boyle, whose care was equal to his quickness, and whose caution hindered him from hazarding any thing that might shock weak minds, or tender consciences. Final Causes, he observes, designate some grand and general ends of the universe, such as exercising and displaying the Creator's wisdom, the communication of his goodness, and the admiration and thanks due to him from his intelligent creatures: That all the several parts of creation, even of animals and plants, were so framed and placed, as not only to persevere in their own present state, but to conduce to the good and welfare of the whole: That it is often allowable, from the manifest and apposite uses of these parts, to collect some of the particular ends for which the Creator designed them: That it is rational from the manifest fitness of some things, to infer that they were ordained to these ends by an intelligent agent: That we ought not to be hasty in concluding upon the particular use of a thing, or the motives that may have induced the author of nature so to frame it, &c.

In the summer of this year, Mr Boyle was constrained, against his will, to publish an account of some accidents and inconveniences under which he had long laboured, partly in justification of his fame, and partly to inform the world of the loss of many of his writings, which were either stolen from him,

or destroyed by corrosive liquors. This he did in a public advertisement, intended to serve as a kind of explanatory preface to such tracts as he might send abroad in a mutilated and unfinished state. It would have been difficult for any other person to have given such a notification, without incurring the imputation of vanity or self-conceit; but in Mr Boyle's case, it serves to give a higher and more expressive notion of his worth and excellence; and in fact was so important to himself and the public, that it could not be omitted.

The immediate reason he assigns for this advertisement was, to satisfy the lovers of learning in general, as well as his own friends and acquaintance, why he did not perform the several promises he had made, of publishing many discourses upon curious and useful subjects; and some of which were indispensable to the elucidation of several of his treatises already printed. The cause of this was, the loss of many of his manuscripts by fraud or mischance, some of which were surreptitiously carried off by visitors, in whole volumes; as it was his practice, when he first began to write, to digest his materials into paper-books, which he suspected only furnished greater temptations to the theft. He then had recourse to single detached sheets, which he thought more secure, as it would be difficult to carry away any consecutive part of a discourse. Still, however, he could not prevent fraudulent depredations, and in this way lost many centuries of experiments, remarks, explications, &c.; and in addition to these misadventures, his servant having broken a bottle of oil of vitriol, the contents penetrated into a chest, where were deposited many papers finished

for press; and in consequence, whole treatises were either defaced entirely, or so spoiled, that it was difficult for him to restore them to any degree of perfection.

But these hardships were not all; for he had grievous complaints to make of the treatment he had experienced from plagiaries both at home and abroad; for many persons copied his works without naming him; inserted his experiments, with a few trivial alterations, as their own; and arrogated to themselves several of his inventions. These misfortunes, he conceived, required some public explanation; both to vindicate his character, and account for defects and seeming improprieties in his writings.

Notwithstanding all his care and caution, he now found his health and strength began sensibly to decline; which set him upon devising the most economical methods in the expenditure of his time, so as might be the most beneficial to the republic of letters. It was with this view, that he no longer communicated particular discourses, or new discoveries to the Royal Society, because this could not be done without withdrawing his thoughts from pursuits which he deemed of greater importance.

For the same reason, together with the confusion into which his affairs in Ireland were thrown by the turbulence of the Revolution, he resigned his post of Governor of the Corporation for propagating the gospel in New England; which he communicated in a letter to Mr Le Clerc, expressing the great satisfaction he had experienced, for many years, in promoting so excellent a work; and his regret at being obliged to resign so honourable,

and to him so agreeable, an employment. "For my part," (says he,) "gratitude obliges me to wish, both for your sake and that of the work you are engaged in, that your next Governor may be as faithful and affectionate as your last, but much more capable and prosperous: And though I must cease to serve you in my former station, you will not find me more backward to serve you in my reduced capacity; and I hope you will do me the right to believe, that I shall heartily rejoice to see the great and good work you are pursuing, prosper in your charitable hands; though I can have the honour but to contribute my good wishes to it."

Other arrangements were also made by this great and amiable character, which indicated his consciousness how short the remaining period of his life might be, and the calm determination he had adopted to apply it to the best advantage. He published an advertisement, containing his reasons for declining the usual visits which were then paid him, in order that he might not be obliged to exhaust his powers, by speaking daily with so many persons; and might apply a larger portion of his time, to arrange and repair the deficiencies of his papers; that as he had been serviceable to the public in his life; the collections he left behind him might not prove useless at his decease. He caused also a board to be placed over his door, with an inscription, signifying when he did and did not receive visitors; which he restricted, unless upon very extraordinary occasions, to two full days each week, *viz.* on the forenoons of Tuesdays and Fridays, being foreign post days, and on Wednesdays and Saturdays, in the afternoon.

These arrangements, which in another man might have seemed the effusions of vanity, or assumed importance, serve only, in him, to shew the extent of his celebrity, and the ardour of his literary patriotism. His motives were so far superior to any affectation of greatness, as to permit him to do with ease and simplicity, what in other men would have required much apology.

Among the works which this retirement permitted him to finish, was a "Curious Collection of Elaborate Processes in Chemistry," which he designed "as a kind of Hermetic Legacy to the studious disciples of that art," and which he earnestly requested a particular friend to impart to the world faithfully, and in his own expressions. This Collection, however, was never published, as well as some other curious tracts relating to the same subject, found among his chemical papers; which, it is said, he left orders to be submitted to the inspection of three physicians; being unwilling to have them lost to the public. These are supposed, by some of his biographers, to have contained many important discoveries, especially on his favourite study of chemistry, which was perpetually opening to him such a new scene of wonders; and their suppression or destruction has been considered an irreparable loss. From various circumstances, it has been conjectured that Mr Boyle believed in the possibility of transmuting other metals into gold. This persuasion, it is said, was avowed by himself to Dr Halley, and has been assigned as the reason of his having procured the repeal of a statute of Henry IV. against the multiplying of gold and silver,—an opinion which has since been considered as without foundation.

In 1690, was published his "*Medicina Hydrostatica*, or Hydrostatics applied to the *Materia Medica*, shewing how to discover whether medicines be genuine or adulterate ; to which is subjoined, a way of estimating Ores by Hydrostatics." He had prepared materials for a second volume, as he informs us, but which never appeared. The following year, he communicated "An Account of some Observations made in the great Congregation of Waters, by lowering down bottles into the sea, 600 feet from the surface,"—an experiment which he had made several years before, in order to resolve some difficulties concerning the coldness of water ; and, which he tells us, made a great noise in the Court of Charles II. The last work he published himself, was his "*Experimenta et Observationes Physicæ*, wherein are briefly treated of several subjects relating to Natural Philosophy, in an experimental way, to which is added, a small Collection of strange Reports, Part I." The second part never appeared.

Besides these works which chiefly treat of natural science, Mr Boyle published several others, which were more intimately connected with religion, and some of which have been already noticed. In 1674, he published a treatise entitled, "The Excellency of Theology, compared with Natural Philosophy." This discourse was written in 1665, when, to avoid the fatal plague which then raged in London, he was obliged to retire into the country, and frequently to pass from place to place, without having the benefit of his books. In 1675, he published, without his name, "Some Considerations about the Reconcilableness of Reason and Religion," to which is annexed, "A Discourse about the Possibility of the Resurrection."

This work was intended to consist of two parts, one to shew, that the Christian need not lay aside his Reason; and the other, that he is not commanded to do so; but he thought proper to keep this part from accompanying the former, which seemed the most reasonable, and most likely to make impression on that sort of persons, whom he chiefly designed to persuade. “ Though (says he) it be a mistake amongst many, to think that to embrace our religion, we must renounce our reason; and that to be a Christian, one must cease to be a man, and what is more, forsake being a philosopher; yet I must make the negative answer, that I do not think a Christian, to be truly so, is obliged to forego his reason; either by denying the dictates of right reason, or laying aside the use of it.”

This position he proceeds to establish, by offering proofs, or positive inducements; as well as by answering such objections as might be alleged against it. Several propositions are submitted to the reader's consideration: That Christianity ought to be distinguished from the dogmas of particular churches and sectaries, who have obtruded their own inventions as parts of religion, increased the number of its mysteries, and confounded it with scholastic subtleties which would have puzzled St Paul, as well as Aristotle: That a distinction must be kept between reason considered in itself, and reason as exercised by philosophers, or sects and societies of men; since many things may disagree with their axioms and conclusions, which are not contrary to sound reason or true philosophy: And that the doctrines of religion ought to be viewed in connection, and not singly or se-

parately ; since many things, if so considered, may appear unreasonable, which yet may be very credible, if considered as parts or consequences of a general system. The sum of his reasoning is, that pure Christianity being amply attested by proper arguments, so that its proofs, whether they be demonstrative or not, are sufficient to justify a rational and prudent man's embracing it, the objections drawn from reason against it, do not prove the belief of it to be inconsistent with reason, nor outweigh the arguments alleged in its defence.

In 1685, he produced another excellent theological treatise, entitled, " Of the high veneration Man's Intellect owes to God, peculiarly for his Wisdom and Power ;" which was only a part of a much larger work, intended afterwards to be given to the world. In 1690, he published his " Christian Virtuoso, shewing that by being addicted to experimental philosophy, a man is rather assisted than indisposed to be a good Christian, Part I. To which are subjoined, 1. a Discourse about the distinction that represents some things as above reason, but not contrary to it. 2. The first chapter of a Discourse, entitled, Greatness of mind promoted by Christianity." In the advertisement to this work, he mentions a second part of the Christian Virtuoso, which he had begun, and intended to complete ; but sickness, business, and a multitude of visits which he could not avoid, so distracted and retarded him, that he was induced to lay aside his materials to some future opportunity. This part he did not live to finish, but it appeared in its imperfect state, in a subsequent edition of his works.

- In this little Tract, which may be regarded as

one of the ablest defences of theology, against the objections of scientific sceptics that was ever penned, he shews that a deep insight into nature, instead of alienating the mind from religion, tends to confirm a man in the belief of it, and to increase his veneration for its divine author. "It hath commonly been looked upon," (says he), "as very strange, that a diligent cultivator of experimental philosophy should be a zealous embracer of the Christian religion; or that a great esteem of the one, and a reverence for the other, should be compatible in the same person: But we hope to make it appear, that if the experimental way of philosophising contains any thing which may indispose a man to assent to the truth, and live according to the laws of the Christian religion; those few things are abundantly countervailed, by the peculiar advantages it affords a man of a well-disposed mind, towards making him a good Christian; provided his mind inclines him to make a pious application of the truths he discovers."

These advantages he states to be, a confirmation of our belief in the existence and chief attributes of the Deity, which appear from the fabric and structure of the universe,—in the immortality of the soul, which receives many convincing proofs from what philosophy teaches of the physiology of mind and body, and the essential difference of their attributes,—in the doctrine of divine providence, so manifestly inculcated in the excellent contrivances and regular vicissitudes of nature;—and with regard to Christianity, philosophy may be equally serviceable, by enabling us the better to examine the testimony of its witnesses, the intrinsic character of their writings, and even the argument

grounded upon miracles, which so many have attempted to explain away as delusions or impossibilities. "It may further," (he remarks), "dispose an experimental philosopher to receive the Christian religion, that it helps him to judge right of those strange miracles which are proposed and believed as such; for the knowledge he hath of the operations of nature in mathematics, mechanics, and chemistry, will help him to distinguish betwixt those things that are strange and surprising, and those that are miraculous—betwixt natural magic and the effects of divine power; and will discover those subtle cheats and collusions of impostors, which, for want of a knowledge of true philosophy, have eluded a great many, even learned men, and drawn them into idolatrous superstitions, or other erroneous tenets."

Among others of his religious treatises, was his "Free Discourse against Customary Swearing with a Dissuasive from Cursing," which was not published till after his death. There were a great many papers on theological subjects found among his manuscripts, but never published; the list of which may be seen in Dr Birch's edition of his works. Of his posthumous writings that have been given to the world, the following are the titles:—"The General History of the Air, designed and begun;" "Medicinal Experiments, or a Choice Collection of Remedies, for the most part simple, and easily prepared;" "General Heads for the Natural History of a Country, great or small, drawn out for the use of travellers and navigators;" "A Paper, containing an account of his making Phosphorus;" "A way of examining Waters, as to Freshness or Saltness;" "The

Third and last Volume of Medicinal Experiments ; or a Collection of Choice Remedies, &c. used in Families, and fit for the use of Country People."

In the summer of 1691, there was a sensible alteration of his health, which premonished him that death could not be very remote, and induced him to think of settling his worldly affairs. Accordingly, in July, he executed his last will and testament ; to which he afterwards added several codicils. In October following, his infirmities increased, which was probably occasioned by his tender concern for the illness of his beloved sister, Lady Ranelagh, with whom he had long lived in the greatest harmony. She died on the 23rd of December ; and on the 30th, she was followed to the grave by her distinguished brother, who died about twelve o'clock at night, in the 65th year of his age ; with so little pain, that it was evident life went out merely for want of oil to maintain the flame. He was interred, on the 7th of January, at the upper end of the south side of the chancel of St Martin's in the Fields, in Westminster, near the body of his sister. His funeral was decent, and as much without pomp as possible, considering the number of persons of distinction that attended, besides his own numerous relations. Dr Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, preached his funeral sermon, from Ecclesiastes, ii. 26 ; an excellent and most suitable discourse, and containing many appropriate remarks on the virtues and charities of the honourable person in question.

In his personal appearance, Mr Boyle is represented as tall, but slender ; his countenance pale and emaciated, though in youth his complexion

was fresh and healthful. His constitution had become so tender and delicate, that when he went abroad, he had divers sorts of cloaks to put on, which he regulated by his thermometer, according to the temperature of the air. Considering the feebleness of his constitution, and the weakness of his eyes, the quantity of his reading, writings, and experiments, must appear astonishing. The simplicity of his diet was remarkable, and to all appearance, was that which preserved his life so long. This he practised so strictly, that in course of about thirty years, he neither ate nor drank to gratify his appetites, but merely to support nature ; and such was his regularity, that he never once transgressed in the quantity or kind of whatever was prescribed for him.

In conversation, especially at first, he hesitated a little, but did not stammer. His speech was slow and deliberate ; and he was extremely candid and affable in conversation. Though inclined naturally to be cholerick, he had gained a perfect ascendancy over this passion. His modesty was such that he did not dictate to others, but proposed his own sentiments with due distrust, and was ready to hearken to what others suggested. When he differed from any, he expressed himself in so humble and obliging a manner, that he was never known to treat with neglect, or offend any person in his whole life, by any part of his conduct. He could be warm, when there was a proper occasion for warmth, that is, in the cause of truth, which he always vigorously defended ; but in his reproofs, he never used angry or reproachful expressions. He was particularly careful never to speak ill of the absent, and if the dis-

course at any time bore hard upon any character, he was immediately silent ; or would interpose by reproof or raillery, to give the subject another turn.

What adds to the beauty of his character, is, that he was the same in his most secret recesses, as he appeared to the world. He affected nothing that was solemn or supercilious ; and it was never discovered that any artifice was concealed under all this appearance of goodness. He had nothing of frolic or levity about him,—no relish for idle or extravagant pleasures ; but he had a great deal of becoming cheerfulness, as well as good nature, and tender friendship. His conversation, especially among ladies, was facetious and agreeable ; and his humour, even on other occasions, was sometimes so copious and lively, that Cowley the poet, and Sir William Davenant thought him equal, in that respect, to the most celebrated wits of that age.

His mode of life was altogether plain and unaffected, with an utter neglect of pomp in clothes, furniture, or equipage ; and though he was not ennobled like his four elder brothers, this was entirely owing to his own disinclination, as he was several times offered a peerage, which he constantly refused to accept. He was too upright and conscientious in principle, to practise those arts necessary to gratify ambition, and therefore withdrew himself early from Courts and public affairs. It was his lot to live in an age of turbulence and insecurity, both in Church and State ; which gave him so true a notion of the vanity of titles, and the danger of power, that instead of soliciting either, he was anxious to decline and avoid them. But his extraordinary worth and reputation procured

him that access to kings which is generally reserved as the exclusive privilege of nobility. Charles II. and his successors, James and William, were all so highly pleased with his conversation, that they often used to discourse with him with great familiarity.

He never was married, though it appears several very advantageous proposals were made to him ; one anonymously, and another on the part of Lady Mary Hastings, sister to the Earl of Huntingdon : but he still persisted in his resolution of living single. It is mentioned by Evelyn, that he courted the beautiful and ingenious daughter of Carey, Earl of Monmouth, and that to this passion was owing his Seraphic Love ; although it does not appear from any of his papers that he ever entertained the least thoughts of that kind.

His character and reputation for learning went far beyond any of his contemporaries, and has seldom been equalled in any age. From the beginning of his life he raised such hopes, as those who considered him most attentively thought it scarcely possible ever to see realised. Yet without fear of flattery, it may be affirmed, that he surpassed even their highest expectations. He made philosophy the business of his life, from the two noblest motives that man could possibly conceive ; the desire of being serviceable to his kind, and of manifesting the goodness of the Divine Creator.

His performances are recommended, not more by the novelty, variety, and usefulness of the subjects he treats, than by the easy and familiar manner in which they are handled. He accommodates himself to the unlearned, as well as to the philosopher and the scholar ; communicating with the

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utmost candour and simplicity those numerous and important discoveries, which he had made, often at an immense expense of labour and application. Beginning with his reader at the elements, or fundamental principles of things, he conducts him with exquisite judgment, through all the regions of nature, to furnish him with subjects whereon to exercise his faculties. He has been every where careful to shew, that the best and most solid foundation for philosophy is its usefulness to mankind; and that to manifest these advantages, is the only way to gain it the reputation it deserves. With him it was an active and not a mere speculative study, as it had been in the hands of schoolmen and alchemists. He had the justest conceptions of truth that the human mind can frame; so cautious in examining and reporting, as to avoid the least imputation of credulity; and on the other hand, so well acquainted with the powers of nature, that he never presumed to set any limits to them, or hindered any accession of knowledge by that sort of incredulity which sometimes attends superior learning. His design was to examine into the constitution of things, to see into what principles they might be resolved, and of what they were compounded.

This experimental process was not restricted to any particular branch of science, but applied in its full latitude, to all the elements, and all the bodies they mix with, or go to compose air, earth, fire, and water, were all scrutinized, and tortured by experiments, to confess their natures, offices, uses, the wisdom and design of their creation, &c. In opposition to those who would represent the world as a rude heap of confused inactive matter, he con-

vinces us that it is a grand and noble machine, continually actuated, and governed by a most wise and beneficent Being, who keeps all its parts in motion, and regulates them according to certain reciprocal laws. By bringing men acquainted with these laws, he has taught them to make use of the same stratagems and contrivances which nature herself employs ; shewed them how to make the most advantageous application of those powers, and how to make the several branches of natural knowledge mutually assist each other, and all conspire in their turn, to the same great principle of utility.

There is no profession or condition among men, but may be benefited by his discoveries. The merchant, the mechanic, the scholar, and the gentleman, are all under equal obligations to him. He exhibits the arts and trades in a new light ; and makes them what they really are, a part of natural philosophy ; reveals some of their mysteries ; and advances the most proper means to encourage and multiply them. The goldsmith, the lapidary, the jeweller, the dyer, the glass-maker, artisans of all kinds, will from him receive useful information, as to the working, managing, and employing to advantage their various commodities, materials, and engines. The mineralist, the miner, the assayer, are instructed to find, and separate their ore to the greatest profit, to increase the quantity, to meliorate, and enrich, and purify their metals ; and accurately to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit and adulterate. The husbandman, the architect, and the builder, may from him learn something of their respective arts, and how to choose the best materials for their several purposes. The painter

is shewn how to mix and improve his colours; the physician, the anatomist, the apothecary, and the chemist, are all indebted to him for discoveries and preparations in some branch or other of their professions. No part of mankind has been neglected by him; but he has shewn a more particular regard for those arts and sciences wherein the health and happiness of the human species is concerned. Medicine he has considered, and improved in most of its departments; shewn how to distinguish genuine drugs from adulterate,—the way in which specifics may act,—how to judge of the salubrity of air, water, and climate,—and how to examine and apply the virtues of mineral springs.

In short, there is scarcely an art, or profession, or production in nature, that has not derived some valuable advantages from his experiments and discoveries. His philosophy was not expended in building aerial schemes, or chimerical and romantic theories; it was altogether taken up with ordinary and familiar objects, whose hidden properties and uses he called forth, and explained in the most easy and familiar terms; surprising men with a sight of their own ignorance in regard to things so near them, so important in themselves, and so necessary to the welfare and true enjoyment of human life.

What principally recommends him, and distinguishes him from the vulgar herd of chemists, naturalists, and philosophers, who in his time engaged in those studies, either from the vanity of forming a system, or the sordid ambition of enriching themselves by the discovery of imaginary gold, is the candour, generosity, and beneficence

of his disposition. He was at immense pains and expense in making his inquiries ; he spared no time, no money, no diligence in pursuing discoveries for the public advantage, without any view to increase his own fortune, which he happily thought sufficient of itself. His soul was as great and noble, as his genius was comprehensive ; for he made the world a generous present of all the fruits of his labours, without the least expectation of reward.

And what shews him in the most amiable point of light, he was far above the selfish pleasure of being admired for a genius, or raising a reputation as the founder of a sect. Though he wanted not capacity, or abilities to have constructed a pompous and magnificent system in natural and chemical science, more durable perhaps than had ever appeared in the world before, he nobly despised this poor but flattering gratification ; expressing himself with the childlike humility of Newton, that notwithstanding all he had done,—all the labour and expense he had bestowed on natural inquiries,—the vastly numerous and important discoveries he had made, he saw nothing but the first dawnings of science,—sketched only the rudiments of natural knowledge ; and charged posterity to consider him but as a beginner, and not to stop short with his observations, but to pursue their researches through all the regions of nature, in the full assurance, that the further they inquired into the works of the universal Architect, the more beauty and harmony, the greater use and satisfaction they would find among them. His discoveries have been repeated and extended since his death by thousands of active and intelligent operators, who

have all profited by his researches, and proved his inviolable fidelity to truth. But the superior advances of science will not lessen the opinion of his high merit, at least in the mind of any liberal and enlarged inquirer into nature. Had he lived in the present age, he would have been inexpressibly delighted to see natural knowledge making such rapid and extensive improvements, and would, no doubt, have himself contributed to accelerate its progress.

These occupations, incessant and diversified as they were, formed but one department in the wide and almost boundless field of his acquirements. Besides his acquaintance with the constitution of nature, the productions of almost all countries, the virtues and properties of plants, ores, and minerals in different climates, he was intimately familiar with many other branches, not connected with experimental science. "His knowledge," (says Dr Burnet), "was of so vast an extent, that if it were not for the variety of vouchers, I should be afraid to say all I know. He was a great master of the Greek language, and read the New Testament in the original with such attention, that he could have quoted it almost as readily as the English version. He carried the study of the Hebrew tongue very far into the Rabbinical writings; so that he could have quoted remarkable passages very readily; and he drew up a grammar in it for his own use. He learned likewise the Chaldee, and the Syriac, purely, as he said, to be able to read the divine discourses of our Saviour in his own language; and he would have gained a thorough knowledge of the Arabic, if the infirmity of his eyes had not interrupted his progress in it.

He had read so much of the Fathers, that he had formed a clear judgment of all the eminent ones. He had read over a vast number of commentaries on the Scriptures, which he had studied to so good purpose, and with so critical a strictness, that few men, whose profession obliges them chiefly to that sort of learning, have gone beyond him in it; and he had so great a regard for that sacred Book, which he compared to the diamond among precious stones, that if any one in discourse had dropped aught that gave him a clearer view of any passage in it, he received it with great pleasure. The Bible was his constant study; for he had not only several chapters read to him every day, but once a-week he had a chapter read to him in Hebrew, and for several years he set apart every Saturday morning for the same purpose. He had gone with great exactness through the whole controversies of religion, and had a just idea of the entire body of divinity. He run the whole compass of the mathematical sciences; and though he did not set up for an inventor in them, yet he knew even the abstrusest parts in geometry. Geography in the several branches of it, that related to navigation or travelling, history and books of travels were his diversion. He went very nicely through all the parts of physic, only the tenderness of his nature made him less able to endure the exactness of anatomical dissections, especially of living animals, though he knew these to be most instructive."

To these vast and almost incredible acquirements, he added the character of a sincere and exemplary Christian; so that we are at a loss which to admire most, his extensive knowledge, or his exalted piety. These excellences kept

pace with each other; the former never carried him to vanity, nor the latter to enthusiasm. He was regular in the exercises of devotion; and most constant and serious in his secret addresses to the Deity. He had the profoundest veneration for the great God of heaven and earth; so that the very name of God was never mentioned by him, without a pause and a visible stop in his discourse,—a practice in which he was so exact, that one who was acquainted with him above twenty years, never remembered observing him once to fail in it. Never did religion sit more easy upon a man, or add greater dignity to a character. He had possessed himself with such an amiable view of Christianity, separated from either superstitious practices, or the sourness of parties, that he condemned whatever tended to lessen its obligations, or raise feuds and divisions among its professors. He always considered it as a system of truths, which ought to purify the hearts, and govern the lives of those who embraced it. He loved no narrow thoughts, no low or bigotted opinions in religion; and was therefore much troubled at the disputes and schisms which had arisen about trivial matters; while the great and most important, as well as most universally acknowledged truths, were by all sides lamentably neglected.

His zeal was lively where the interests of true religion were concerned; but it never led him to mingle in the intestine wars of theological controversy; and as he did not shut himself exclusively within any party, so neither did he reprobate others who were of different sentiments. He had a most particular aversion to all severities and persecutions for conscience sake. “I have seldom,” (says

Dr Burnet), “observed him to speak with more heat and indignation, than when that came in his way.” Though he always expressed his judgment and inclination to be for the Church of England, yet he was an advocate for moderation to those who dissented from it;* and at the Restoration, when the Episcopal clergy retaliated on the ejected Puritans, with unchristian and inhuman severity,

* His attachment to the established church he retained, even in the times when Prelacy was abolished; and though his charity extended to all different sects, he never frequented separate assemblies. It is recorded of him, that he once went, perhaps out of curiosity, to hear Sir Henry Vane preach, who was at that time reputed the head of a new sect, called Seekers. Sir Henry’s text was from Daniel xii. 2; a passage which has always been reckoned one of the clearest proofs of the resurrection, to be found in the Old Testament, but which the preacher ingeniously wrested to his own use, the whole scope of his discourse being to shew that many doctrines of religion, which had long been dead and buried, should in the latter days be awakened into life, and many false doctrines should, by the power of truth, be doomed to shame and everlasting contempt. When the harangue was concluded, Mr Boyle stood up in presence of the congregation, and stated his objections, “thinking himself obliged, for the honour of God’s truth, to say, that the meaning of that place, which was expressly referred to by our Saviour, by way of asserting the resurrection, should not be suffered to evaporate into allegory: and that if its literal meaning were denied, he was ready to prove it, both from the text and context in the original language, and from the best expositors, Christian and Jewish.” When Mr Boyle sat down, Sir Henry rose and said, that he agreed with him, as to the literal sense of the words; and that his discourse was only in the way of such occasional meditations, as he thought edifying to the people. Some of Mr Boyle’s friends afterwards remonstrated with him on the boldness of this conference, especially considering the popularity of Vane, and the enthusiasm of

he held frequent conferences on the subject with Tennison, Stillingfleet, Burnet, and Barlow, recommending them to have something written in defence of liberty of conscience; which he published at his own expense.

His charity to all who were in want, especially to those learned men who were cruelly doomed to struggle with necessities, was quite extraordinary. Great sums were freely distributed by him, without the partialities of sect, kindred, or nation: for he considered himself as a part of human nature, and a debtor to the whole race of men. He took care to do this so secretly, that even those who knew all his other concerns, could never discover the channels of his bounty. Except the persons themselves, or those immediately intrusted with the affair, none ever knew how a very large proportion of his estate, which went away invisibly, was distributed; even he himself kept no account of it, lest it might fall into other hands. "I speak," (says Bishop Burnet), "with full knowledge on this article, because I had the honour to be made use of by him in it. If those who have fled hither from the persecutions in France, or the calamities of Ireland, feel a sensible decay of their secret supplies, with which they were often furnished, without knowing from whence they came, they will conclude that they have lost not only a purse, but an estate; which went so freely among them, that I have reason to say, that for some years, his charity went beyond £1000, per annum.

his auditors: "But, (said he) having no little awes of that kind upon me, I thought myself bound to enter the lists with him, as I did, that the sense of the Scriptures might not be depraved."

In Wales, many of the poor nonconformist ministers were relieved by his bounty ; and in Ireland he ordered very large gifts to be made to the incumbents of those parishes where his estates lay, as well as to the surviving widows of those who were deceased. This he did upon two occasions, to the amount of nearly £600, and ordered by his will, another distribution of an indefinite amount, as far as his estates would bear. It appears also that his steward had orders to set aside, every year, about a fifth part of the clear annual income of his tythes and impropriations, to be employed in pious uses.

His zeal for the Christian religion extended itself beyond his own country and connections. In 1677, when he was a Director of the East India Company, which he had been for many years, and was even instrumental in procuring their charter, he was very earnest in recommending to them the propagation of the gospel in those countries where their commerce gave them an opportunity, and where they had flourishing factories. "It seemed to me," (he observes in one of his letters), "very fit, that we whose endeavours God had of late so signally prospered, should pay him some little acknowledgment of his many blessings : and that remembering ourselves to be Christians, as well as merchants, we should attempt to bring those countries some spiritual good things, whence we so frequently brought back temporal ones : And I wished the Company, in particular, should have the honour to silence the reproaches of those who I wish had less pretence to upbraid the Protestants, and among them the English, with the neglect of making proselytes to the Christian religion."

To promote this meritorious object, he caused, the following year, at his own expense, a translation of the New Testament to be made into the Malayan tongue, which was printed and distributed over all the East Indies. He gave a noble reward to Dr Pococke, for translating into Arabic Grotius's excellent treatise "On the Truth of the Christian Religion;" and was at the charge of a whole impression, which he took care should be dispersed in all the countries where that language was understood. He was resolved to have carried on the translation of the New Testament in the Turkish language, but the Company thinking this a duty incumbent on themselves, he had only the merit of contributing largely towards the undertaking. He expended £700, on the edition of the Irish Bible, which he caused to be disseminated in Ireland, "for having that poor ignorant people informed in the true knowledge of God, in their own language."

He was also a very liberal benefactor to the Highlands of Scotland, in contributing towards the Gaelic translation of the Scriptures, for their use. "The inhabitants of the Highlands," (says the document which gives an account of this charity), "have never had the Bible in their own language. Some endeavours were formerly used to have it printed in that language, but they proved unsuccessful. The honourable and pious Mr Boyle, who had caused to be printed at a great charge, 500 Bibles in Irish, has sent above 200 into Scotland; which made one book for each parish in the Highlands, which are of very large extent, containing great numbers of people. The same excellent person was at the charge of printing for the

use of the Highlanders, 3000 Catechisms and Prayer-books, with some passages of Scripture, containing the principal heads of the Christian religion; they never having had any such helps before. He hath also given money to reprint other 3000.*

* "In all those places (this document proceeds) where Bibles have been sent, the people express a wonderful joy, and a great desire to know the word of God; so that they who can read are at some pains to teach others to read also. And such is their zeal, that they send for the Bible, sometimes to one part of the parish, and sometimes to another, that they may read on the week days; and then they return it to the church on the Lord's Day, that all may hear it read publicly. And it is very remarkable, that, amidst the public commotions in that kingdom, (occasioned by the Revolution) scarce any of those Highlanders who have received Bibles and Catechisms, and been instructed, have joined themselves to the adversaries of the present happy settlement." To some of these benevolent grants, specific conditions were annexed: That ministers should not only read several chapters every Lord's Day, but on other days, as they might have occasion, as at baptisms, burials, marriages, &c. And that the Bible, being for the sole use of the parish, could not be alienated from this design; so that if the minister died, or was removed, the Bible was still to be kept and preserved for the use of the same parish. It is remarkable that, in this country, so famed for its attention to religious education, the Highlanders should have been unprovided with the Scriptures in their native tongue, till 1690. The zeal of Boyle was not followed up with a corresponding charity in their own countrymen; and, notwithstanding the various exertions that were subsequently made, the means of knowledge were long miserably inadequate to the demand. It was not till 1802, that they obtained a complete translation of the Bible; and it cannot be recorded without a blush, that half of all the population are still unable to read! and that 100,000 persons are wholly without the Bible!

He was a warm promoter of the design for spreading the gospel in America, for which he gave £300, during his life, and in his will he set apart £100, more, "to be employed as a stock for the relief of poor Indian Converts." These and various other benefactions were gratefully acknowledged, in many letters from the famous missionary Elliot of New England.

But the most memorable proof of his regard for the interests of revealed religion, and that by which he is best known, is the foundation of the Theological Lecture in London, that bears his name, and which has given occasion to so many eloquent and able defences of revelation. The business for which he appointed these Lecturers, who were to be elected for a term not exceeding three years, "was, among others, to be ready to satisfy real scruples, and to answer such new objections and difficulties as might be started, to which good answers had not been made; and also to preach eight sermons in the year, on the proofs of Christianity, against notorious infidels, *viz.* Atheists, Theists, Pagans, Jews, and Mahometans; not descending lower, to any controversies that are among Christians."

From this noble institution have proceeded many learned vindications, both of natural and revealed religion, from men who have been ornaments to science as well as to the church, Bentley, Harris, Clarke, Whiston, Butler, and a multitude of others, whose writings have done eminent service to the cause of truth, and reared a system of evidence which no sophistry or subtlety can overturn. Though their reasonings may not, on every point, be alike important or convincing, they have certainly contributed to increase the number

of rational and well-informed believers ; notwithstanding their utility has been doubted or disparaged, even by some who were zealous friends of religion. It cannot be denied, however, that while in Catholic countries, where the creed is implicit faith, and where theological discussions are either proscribed as heresy, or cramped by the fear of tortures and inquisitions, the mass of the population is almost wholly divided into ignorant bigots or determined infidels ; in this country, where Christianity has been canvassed with severe and fearless inquiry, there are perhaps, amidst all our infidelity, more believers, than in any other nation, whose principles are established on the only secure basis of sober examination and rational conviction.

Such is an outline of the life and labours of this extraordinary person, whose merit transcends all that has ever been said in his praise, and which would require abilities equal to his own, even to do them common justice. Considered in every point of light, as a man, a philosopher, and a Christian, he came as near perfection as the defects of human nature would allow ; and though he was unambitious of fame, yet the most universal encomiums, both at home and abroad, were conferred on him while living, and have constantly attended his memory.

As the reputation he had acquired in his lifetime, had reached to many and distant countries, so that no strangers, who had any taste for learning or philosophy, ever left England without seeing him ; so after his death, literary men of all nations, were eager to heap honours on his tomb, and have endeavoured to outvie each other in their commenda-

tions of his character. His own countrymen, Burnet, Shaw, Birch, Boulton, Hughes, Granger, Johnson, and Priestley, have spoken of him in the highest style of panegyric, as the father of pneumatic philosophy, the most useful and intelligent inquirer into nature, and the first experimenter that opened the true path of chemical science to the world.

The continental philosophers were no less sensible of his worth, and not behind the most ardent of his admirers, in expressing their respect and veneration. In Italy, his philosophical writings were highly esteemed, though three of his religious treatises were forbidden, by order of the Sacred College, to be read. Morhoff, Stellius, and Mangetus in Germany; Marsilli, Regnault, du Fresnoy, &c. in France; the celebrated historians Bayle and Rapin, have all spoken not only in commendation of his private character, but ranked him as the great improver of the experimental sciences, to whom the learned world is so much indebted. The illustrious Boerhaave, who bore a near resemblance to him, both as a philosopher, a chemist, and a Christian, after pronouncing an elegant eulogium on his works, thus concludes: "Such is the extent of this admirable writer's fame, and such the honour he has done his age and nation, in foreign countries, where his reputation will extend itself in the same proportion with true science, and his glory last as long as there shall subsist a true spirit of learning."

Almost every writer, in short, who mentions him, does it with epithets of applause; and takes pleasure in ranking him with Bacon and Newton. His birth happening the same year that Lord Bacon

died, this coincidence gave rise to a very just and happy compliment, which seemed to have struck the observation of almost all his encomiasts ; that he was the person designed by nature to succeed to the labours and inquiries of that extraordinary man, who appeared to have made him the inheritor of his inquisitive genius, and bequeathed to him, at his departure, the mantle of true philosophy.

Among the friends and professors of Christianity, a cloud of witnesses might be produced, who have borne their public acknowledgments to his numerous benefactions, and done their endeavour to render his character worthy of the approbation of posterity. Some of the preachers at the Boylean institution, have outdone themselves in striving to do justice to the piety of its founder. His single example, as Dr Burnet observes, is the simplest and most convincing of all arguments, what human nature is capable of, and what the Christian religion can add to it,—how far it can both exalt and reward it,—and how divine and pure a thing it must be in itself, which produced so long a series of great effects, through the whole course of this shining life ; which must ever be considered as a pattern for imitation, and amongst the master-pieces even of that Great Hand that made it.

To sum up all ; our sketch, which has already extended beyond its due limits, may justly conclude in the language of triumph and confidence employed by the same venerable prelate : “ What a thing would mankind become, if we had many such ! and how little need would there be of many books writ for the truth and excellency of our religion, if we had more such arguments as this single in-

stance. We might here challenge the whole tribe of libertines, to come and view the usefulness as well as the excellence of Christianity, in a life that was entirely dedicated to it, and see what they can object ;—We might charge them to sum up the many great and good things to be found in him, and from thence to contemplate to how vast a sublimity religion can raise a mind, that does both thoroughly believe it, and is entirely governed by it."

CAPTAIN JAMES WILSON.

CAPTAIN WILSON is well known as the able and enterprising conductor of the first Christian mission to the South Seas, in 1796,—an expedition at that time novel in its character, and altogether unprecedented in its object. He commanded the ship *Duff*, which was purchased and fitted out at the expense of the Missionary Society, for the purpose of introducing the blessings of religion, and the arts of civilized life, among the remote and barbarous islands of the Pacific Ocean,—the destination fixed upon by the Directors, as the most eligible for commencing the benevolent exertions of missionary zeal.

The singular prudence and ability with which he discharged that important trust, not only contributed materially to the success of the expedition, but stamped a general character of respectability on the Society; which speedily manifested itself, in the increased confidence and popularity which the subject attracted, both at home and abroad; and it tended also to secure many favours and valuable privileges, both from our own and other governments, who have lent an attentive ear to their official representations, and extended the shield of their protection over the heads of those adventurous apostles of Christianity, who have since, under the patronage of numerous societies, carried

the message of salvation to almost every region of the habitable earth.

The life of Captain Wilson was marked by a strange variety of changes and misfortunes, and furnishes a narrative, which, for diversity of circumstances, affecting incidents, and striking illustration of the happy influence of religious principles, has but few equals. It affords, at the same time, a beautiful and remarkable development of those kind but mysterious operations of providence, which often makes events that we consider adverse or accidental, to terminate in some wise and salutary result, and accomplishes the most momentous changes in our lives, by means of the most unpromising instruments. In the early period of his life, the perils, imprisonments, and almost incredible sufferings he endured, throw an air of romance over that part of his history, which makes it resemble more the adventures of a fabulous hero, than a literal detail of truth and fact. These interesting events have been recorded at considerable length, as tending, not merely to gratify a laudable curiosity, but to affect that particular view of his character, which it is our main object to elucidate. It is chiefly, however, after he had weathered the storms of captivity and adverse fortune, and retired to enjoy, in calm security, the fruits of his successful speculations in commerce, that his narrative becomes a subject of importance, by presenting him as a convert to the truth of religion, and one of the earliest and most distinguished agents in its propagation among the heathen.

CAPTAIN JAMES WILSON was born in 1760, and was the youngest son of nineteen children.

His father, who was Commander of a ship in the Newcastle trade, trained him from his earliest years for the sea service, a profession for which he soon discovered an excellent capacity. He entered the navy while quite a youth, and served in the American war. He was present at Bunker's Hill, 1775, the first regular battle that was fought between the British army and the Colonists; and at Long-Island, where the Americans effected a dextrous retreat, under cover of a thick fog.

On his return to Europe, he obtained a birth as mate of an East Indiaman, a preferment for which his nautical experience sufficiently qualified him. On their arrival at Bengal, he quitted his ship, and engaged in the service of the country. His bold and seaman-like conduct speedily procured him both friends and promotion. He was employed as the bearer of dispatches to the Nicobar Islands; to advertise the ships returning from the East, of the arrival of the French squadron, under Suffrein, on the coast; but from the leaky state of his small vessel, he was obliged to put about for Madras; and when off Pulicat, where he discovered the French fleet, he was under the necessity of running her on the beach to save their lives.

When he reached Madras, the British troops in that settlement, under Sir Eyre Coote, were in the greatest distress, and in danger of starvation; their stores being nearly exhausted, and all supplies by sea cut off by the French squadron, then at anchor at Pondicherry, while the army of Hyder Ali intercepted their provisions by land. Several ships, laden with rice, were lying ready for their relief, but the enemy's fleet being directly in the way, they durst not attempt the passage. The Gover-

nor of Madras, apprised of Mr Wilson's courage and dexterity, offered him four hundred pagodas if he would undertake to carry down the ships with supplies for the troops to Cuddalore, near which Sir Eyre Coote was encamped.

This hazardous service he engaged to perform ; and embarking immediately with four vessels under his command, all navigated by Hindoos, without a single European on board, except himself, and a military officer on his passage to the army, he proceeded, with sufficient caution, to conduct the long expected stores towards their destination. By a piece of singular good fortune, he passed the French fleet near Pondicherry, in the offing, at such a distance as not to be discovered, at the moment when they were occupied in repairing their water casks, which had been staved, while lying on shore to be filled, by a party of the British grenadiers. This providential escape enabled him to bring in the whole of the cargoes entrusted to his convoy, which proved a most seasonable relief to the army, already reduced to extreme necessity, and threatened with impending famine. For this fortunate adventure, which produced him nearly £1000, he received the most cordial acknowledgments of the General, who invited him next day to dine with his Staff, and placed him at his right hand, in testimony of the high value he set upon his services.

He continued, for some time, to be employed in carrying down supplies, without meeting with any thing in these voyages particularly interesting. On one of these occasions, however, while conveying a valuable cargo of military stores for Sir Edward Hughes, whose ammunition had been exhausted

in a late engagement with the enemy, under Suffrein, he was unfortunately captured by the French; and carried prisoner to Cuddalore, which had lately fallen into their hands. Here he found the officers and crew of the Hannibal doomed to the same captivity. At first the officers were permitted to be at large on parole, and entertained hopes of being shortly exchanged; but these expectations were sadly disappointed.

Hyder Ali, who had overrun and desolated a great part of the Carnatic, and hoped, with the assistance of the French, to expel the British from the whole of that territory, was then using every effort to get English prisoners into his hands; in order to tempt them into his ranks, either by bribery, or the tortures of a lingering death. Suffrein was prevailed upon, by an offer of 300,000 rupees, to deliver up to him all his prisoners at Cuddalore, though the greatest indignation was testified by the Commander and Officers of the fort at this infamous bargain. All the captives on parole were accordingly ordered to be surrendered, without delay, to the escort appointed to carry them next day to Seringapatam, there to join the standard, or be exposed to the brutal cruelty, of the Hindoo conqueror.

No sooner was this intelligence communicated to Captain Wilson, than he determined that very night, if possible, to effect his escape; although no other alternative remained, than dropping from the rampart into the river that ran at the foot of the walls; in hopes of making his way across the country, to some neutral settlement, before he should be discovered. He intimated his design to a brother officer, and his own servant, a Bengalese boy,

who both resolved to accompany him in his flight. They had concerted to meet on the ramparts as it grew dark, before the guard was set, and silently drop down from the battlement ; but ere the hour arrived, his companion's heart failed him. The Captain, with his boy, stole unperceived to the spot, and as not a moment was to be lost, he leaped down from a height of about forty feet, and fortunately pitched on his legs ; but the shock of so great a descent made his chin strike against his knees, with such violence, that he tumbled headlong into the river. Upon recovering himself, he returned instantly to the foot of the wall, and caught the boy, who dropped from the same height, safe in his arms.

All that part of the Tanjore country is low, and intersected by rivers branching from the great Coleroon, some of which are very wide, and dangerous from the rapidity of the tides. These obstacles, however, embarrassing as they were, it was necessary to encounter. As their hopes of safety depended mainly on the distance they could reach before the morning light, he pushed resolutely forward ; and taking the boy on his back, as he could not swim, he crossed three arms of the river, directing his course towards Porto Nuovo, about four leagues and a half distant. Near this place, they were challenged by a centinel, whose inquiries they fortunately eluded by concealing themselves. The river here was very broad, and greatly agitated by the tide. Taking the boy again on his back he plunged in, but after they had advanced a considerable way, the boy became so terrified in the midst of the breakers, that the Captain was compelled to return and put him a-shore, other-

wise they must have inevitably perished together. After directing him to a place of security, he plunged again into the waves ; but the tide running in so strong, he found it impossible, with all his efforts, to gain the opposite side, and was glad to turn back, after being carried to a considerable distance up the stream by the impetuosity of the current.

Here he providentially discovered, on the dry beach, a canoe, which he instantly seized, and was preparing to launch, when two Indians rushed upon him, demanding to know whither he was going, and what his intentions were. Seizing the outrigger of the boat, as his only weapon of defence, he told them, in a determined tone, that he had lost his way, and was proceeding to Tranquebar, where he had urgent business that required instant dispatch. Overawed by his stern and undaunted air, the two black assailants laid down their paddles, and when he had drawn the canoe to the river, they peaceably rowed him across. He continued his route, favoured by moon-light, and after travelling several leagues, he reached the Coleroon before day-break, much exhausted with anxiety and fatigue.

The width of this mighty river, the parent of all the others he had crossed, caused a momentary dismay and hesitation, as he stood friendless and solitary on its sandy brink. But the approach of morning, and the perils of delay, dissipated his reluctant timidity, and casting himself into the flood, after long struggling, and almost in a state of insensibility, he reached the land before sun-rise. He now congratulated himself that all his dangers were past, and his liberty secured ; but these flattering

expectations proved only the harbingers of new and more afflicting calamities.

Upon ascending a sand-bank, to look around him, he was immediately discovered by a party of Hyder's cavalry, scouring the coast. Unable to fly or resist, he was seized in a moment, and stripped naked, his hands tied behind his back; and in this situation he was driven before them several miles to head-quarters, under a burning sun, and covered with blisters; having travelled, as he supposed, since he quitted his prison, more than forty miles, besides all the rivers he had crossed. The officer there, who was a Mahometan, and one of Hyder's chieftains, interrogated Wilson sternly, whence he came, and whither he was going? The prisoner gave him an ingenuous account of his escape from Cuddalore, and the reasons for it, with all the circumstances attending his flight. The officer regarded him at first as an impostor, and could not credit his narrative; telling him, that no man ever yet passed the Colercon by swimming, or could possibly escape the alligators. But being assured of the fact by evidence he could no longer doubt; his indignation changed into reverence, and he began to look upon him as a being of some superior order.

From this place he was marched back, naked and half-famished as he was, to his former prison; and as an additional punishment for his flight, he was refused permission to join his fellow-officers, and thrust into a dungeon among the meanest captives. Next day he was brought out, chained to a common soldier, and in that deplorable condition, in a burning climate, ordered to march on foot

to Seringapatam, nearly five hundred miles distant. His companions, though unable to procure him any redress, expressed their concern by endeavouring to alleviate his miseries, and supplying him with clothes and other necessaries for his long and toilsome journey. But the avarice of his brutal conductors soon deprived him of these slender accommodations; for no sooner had they reached the first halting place, than they again stripped him to the skin, and left him once more exposed to the rays of a vertical sun.

They added insult to cruelty; and after grading him on all day, at night they thrust him, still chained to his fellow-sufferer, into a damp unwholesome prison, crowded with other miserable objects. In various villages through which they passed, he was exhibited to the country people as an object of curiosity, many of them having never before seen a white man. There he was compelled to present himself in all possible positions, and to display all the gestures of which he was capable, that his mercenary keepers might obtain money at the expense of their captive.

On their way, he, with other prisoners were brought into Hyder's presence, who strongly urged them, as the only means of regaining their liberty, to enlist in his service, and profess his religion; which some of them were induced to do, to escape from the horrible barbarities they had suffered. But Captain Wilson, though a stranger to any nobler principles than those of honour, rejected this offer with disdain, and resolved to encounter death with all its horrors, rather than desert his country, or exchange the creed of the Christian, for that of Mahomet; although, as a matter of faith, he pro-

bably regarded all religions with equal indifference.

In consequence of this inhuman treatment, and the forlorn state to which he was reduced, from the want of food and clothing, his health had begun to sink under such a complication of severities. He reached Seringapatam, however, greatly weakened by disease ; his limbs corroded with the irons, his body covered with sores, and emaciated with dysentery, which had attacked him in addition to the rest of his afflictions. Here a new series of calamities, and more aggravated wretchedness awaited him, for he was thrust, without food or medicine, into a noisome dungeon ; and cooped up with one hundred and fifty-three fellow-sufferers, who were chiefly prisoners of Colonel Macleod's Highland Regiment. He was loaded with the very irons which Colonel Baillie had worn, of thirty-two pounds weight ; and kept chained to a common soldier night and day. This extraordinary rigour was inflicted as a punishment for his daring to escape, as well as for his rejecting the tempting offers of Hyder's friendship ; for the other officers, among whom was General Sir David Baird who afterwards avenged their wrongs by storming this very city, were permitted to be at large.

In this horrible captivity, he remained two and twenty months, of unvaried and inexpressible misery. The place of confinement allotted to the common soldiers, was a kind of area or square, covered above, but exposed on all sides to the wind and rain. Thus, without any bed but the earth, or covering except the rags wrapped round him, he continued, fastened to his wretched companion,

and suffering the extremity of disease and privation. Their whole allowance was only a pound of rice a-day for each man, which they had to cook for themselves. This scanty portion, which was often of bad quality, was scarcely sufficient to maintain life, much less to appease the cravings of raging hunger; and they were compelled to the disagreeable resource, in order to make up the deficiency, of collecting and frying the white ants, which pestered them in their prison. The rice was brought in, not in separate rations, but in a large basin; and in order to secure an impartial distribution, and prevent any from taking more than their share, they provided themselves with a small piece of wood, rudely formed into a spoon, which no one was suffered to use but in his regular turn.

Such unexampled misery was more than the human constitution could bear. The hardy and athletic Highlanders fell among the first victims. Dropsy and flux were making daily inroads into this melancholy group of sufferers, and rapidly diminishing their numbers. How Captain Wilson escaped, is truly astonishing. Often was the dead corpse unchained from his arm in the morning, that another living victim might take its place, and fall by the same disease. Yet he himself recovered from the attack which he had when first carried into prison, and for more than a year maintained a tolerable state of health.

Before his captivity expired, however, he was seized with the usual symptoms, and felt the effects of the disorder that had carried off so many others. His body and legs swelled exceedingly, so that his chains were too strait to be endured: his face be-

came livid and bloated, and every appearance seemed to indicate the moment of his dissolution to be at hand: And when his circumstances are considered,—exhausted with famine and disease,—breathing the infected vapours of a prison,—and bearing a weight of iron, cankering and consuming his flesh, it seems next to a miracle that he could ever have recovered or survived. A singular incident, however, whether by design or accidentally, is not said, proved the means of unexpected and instantaneous relief. He happened one day to exchange his usual allowance of rice for a small species of grain, called *ratche pier*, which he eagerly devoured, and being very thirsty, he drank the liquor in which it was boiled; and such was the effect of this diet, that in a very short time his body was reduced almost to a skeleton; and though greatly weakened, he felt completely relieved. The same remedy was recommended to others, and tried with great success by many of his fellow-prisoners.

By this time the ravages of death had greatly thinned their numbers, and it is probable the few that remained, the living monuments of Ali's cruelty, would not have struggled much longer with their miseries, had not the victories of Sir Eyre Coote happily compelled the Barbarian to submit; and extorted from him as one of the conditions of peace, the release of all the British captives. At this announcement, the prison doors flew open, when a scene of inexpressible wretchedness presented itself. Of one hundred and fifty-three brave men, only thirty-two remained, in a state of disease and emaciation, that told too plainly the dismal history of their sufferings. Their humane and compassionate deliverer, Mr Law, son

to the Bishop of Carlisle, immediately provided them with food and clothes, and dressings for their wounds ; but the kindness of their friends had nearly proved, to some of them, as fatal as the cruelties of their oppressors. Though cautioned against the dangers of excess and repletion, their ravenous appetites could not be restrained ; and they devoured their meat with such voracity, as completely to surcharge the weakened and exhausted powers of nature.

Of this number, Captain Wilson was one. After devouring, with too great avidity, a large piece of beef, he was almost instantaneously seized with a violent fever, became delirious, and for a fortnight his life was despaired of. His constitution, which had resisted more than human nature seemed capable of enduring, sustained, in the moment of liberty and abundance, a severer shock than it had yet received, from the complicated infliction of fetters and famine. But in the counsels of Supreme Wisdom, it was determined that he should not thus perish ; for He who had watched over him in prisons, and in perils by sea, restored his understanding, and brought him once more back from the gates of death ; though as yet he acknowledged not the hand of his deliverer, nor expressed one sentiment of thankfulness, in gratitude to his benefactor.

A supply of clothes had been humanely forwarded to the destitute captives, by Lord Macartney ; but there not being a sufficiency for all, some had one thing, some another. To Captain Wilson's share, a very large military hat fell, with a banian and pantaloons, very much in disrepair. As soon as he was capable of undergoing the fa-

tigues of the journey, he joined some others of his countrymen, and proceeded to Madras. Here he was received and welcomed, in the kindest manner, by his former friends, who were not a little astonished at the grotesque figure he cut in his tattered and motley habiliments; which, added to his meagre person, made him very much resemble a maniac. Their hospitable treatment soon restored him to his wonted strength and spirits; and he began to think of entering again on service, as he had yet obtained but a very scanty provision. Accordingly, he made a voyage to Bencoolen and Batavia, as first mate of the *Intelligence*. Bencoolen is a most unhealthy place, and few who visit it escape without the putrid fever. On this occasion, there was a very great mortality among the crew of the *Intelligence*; every European on board, except Captain Wilson, having died before they left Puley Bay. A recruit of black men were taken in to navigate the vessel, and after visiting Batavia, they returned to Bengal. This proved to Captain Wilson a very profitable voyage, though his health had suffered materially.

In this manner he continued, for a year and a half, to improve his fortune; and became himself the Commander, as well as a sharer in the vessel. By one of those mercantile speculations, the success of which seems often to be determined by the most trifling circumstances, he rose at once to prosperity and independence. Taking advantage of a sudden and unexpected turn of the wind, he got the start of all the other merchantmen bound for the same port, and finding the markets very much in want of the articles with which he was freighted, he obtained his own price for the greater

part of his goods, as there was no competitor to contend with him. Thus in one month, and by a singular occurrence in his favour, he realized a sum sufficient to induce him to retire from business, and exchange the toils and hazards of the sea, for the comforts of domestic society.

With this view he embarked, in 1794, as a passenger in a ship that was returning from Bengal to England. On the voyage, he had frequent disputes about religion with a Baptist missionary on board, who was greatly scandalized at his infidel principles, as well as his careless conduct; and used to observe, that he should have more hope of converting the Lascars to Christianity, than Captain Wilson. On arriving in safety at Portsmouth, he immediately began to look about him for an agreeable abode, in which he might repair his shattered health, and enjoy the fruits of his fortunate enterprise. He soon discovered a place to his mind at Horndean, in Hampshire. This he purchased; and set himself down contented, anticipating much happiness from the sports of the country, and the fashionable society in the neighbourhood. Being unmarried, he found it necessary to have a proper person to manage his household economy. This duty he devolved upon his niece, a prudent and agreeable person, and one whose sentiments were imbued with true piety.

Here he lived nearly two years, decent and sober in his conduct, but careless and unconcerned about religion, and an utter stranger to its principles and its power. During all the perils and sufferings he had undergone, his heart appears to have remained as insensible as the nether millstone to any thing like feelings of gratitude or devotion.

No humiliation, no prayer, no sense of sin, no recourse to the blood of a Redeemer, no regard for the future welfare of his soul, ever seems to have entered his thoughts, or alarmed his conscience. He came out of the furnace as hardened and impenitent as ever,—his principles unchanged, and the obduracy of his heart not softened with the tears of repentance, nor melted down into godly sorrow.

His mercies had no better effect than his chastisements and afflictions. He returned to life and health, with the same callous propensities, the same stubborn nature, the same forgetfulness of God, and the same insensibility to those manifestations of divine care, that had in such a wonderful manner led him by a way which he knew not,—preserved him in deaths oft,—in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness,—in journeyings and in prisons,—in perils of waters, in perils in the wilderness, in perils by the heathen; and after all these dangers, crowned his labours with uncommon success, by means which appeared almost miraculous. But the plans of Omniscience are inscrutable; and while they are directed by infinite wisdom, they are also characterized by benevolence. His Divine Master, who had chosen him from the beginning to be the herald of his cross, and to carry the message of eternal life to the neglected solitudes of the Indian Ocean, bore with him in his ignorance and rebellion, and was gradually preparing him, by a series of providences, for that peculiar work, in which he afterwards embarked with so noble and disinterested a zeal.

Captain Wilson's infidelity may be ascribed mainly to two causes, the want of an early and

Scriptural acquaintance with religion ; and his residence for so many years in India : a country which has proved fatal to the principles of many Europeans ; who, making wealth the sole object of their worship, prostrate their hearts before the shrine of this golden image, with a more unhallowed devotion, than if they bent the knee in the chambers of Asiatic idolatry. His mind had been rendered completely callous, by the events and occupations of his life ; and this baleful influence had darkened down upon his faculties, so as to obliterate any remains of religion, and all sense of God's moral government among men.

Like all other disciples of Deism, he entertained lofty conceptions of human nature, and was deeply imbued with a self-complacent admiration of his own goodness. He considered that he had so conducted himself as to merit the congratulations of the world, and had done nothing he could reproach himself with, as unjust to his neighbour, or offensive in the eye of God. He had even in some instances, behaved with a generosity that he thought could not fail to secure for him the divine approbation ; and when compared with others of his countrymen in that part of the world, he flattered himself he ought rather to be celebrated as a man of exalted virtue, than regarded as an unbeliever, or a sinner. He was conscious of the goodness of his heart, and the general integrity of his actions, and therefore saw no reason to embitter his present enjoyments with disagreeable or alarming reflections. Besides, his many wonderful escapes, his singular preservations, and above all, his success in his mercantile engagements, which had raised him to affluence, after being stripped of all

he possessed, led him proudly to imagine that he was not only a child of fortune, but in special favour with the Deity.

He had, while in the prime of life, obtained an easy competency, returned home with a constitution unsubdued by an eastern climate, possessed a cheerful mind, which fitted him for company, and for what the world calls a man of fashion ; it was time, therefore, he conceived, to enjoy himself, and to adopt the maxim of the rich man in the gospel, " Eat, drink, and be merry, for thou hast goods laid up for many years." In this state of tranquillity and easy indifference, he felt no desire to investigate the evidences of religion, or have his repose broken in upon by considerations about the moral government of the world,—the method of man's acceptance with God, or the final retribution to be awarded hereafter to the righteous and the wicked.

It is difficult, indeed, to imagine almost any thing more unlikely, than that the subjects of revelation should engage, or interest a mind so wrapt up in the flattering opinions of superior worth, and the romantic schemes of earthly happiness. The objections must have appeared to him numerous and formidable, against receiving a book as a revelation from God, the design of which was to teach him that his heart was deeply depraved,—that he had been a rebel through life against his Maker,—that he had incurred his displeasure, and must expect pardon and happiness solely through the unmerited mercy of him he had offended. These sentiments, however, humiliating and repugnant as they were to his present system, he came at length to adopt.

The conversations and exemplary conduct of

his niece, had no small share in diffusing this preparatory influence over his mind; though he regarded her anxiety about religious ordinances, as a weakness, or a needless scrupulosity of conscience; and her aversion to mingle in fashionable society, he mistook for a morose contempt of innocent gaieties and social amusement. He was favoured also with the acquaintance and friendship of Captain Sims, a gentleman who had retired from the active duties of his profession, upon a respectable competency, and was residing in the immediate neighbourhood. Captain Sims was then advanced in life, but he had for many years regularly attended divine worship, and professed a zealous attachment to the principles of vital religion. He had frequently introduced the subject to Captain Wilson, representing to him the dangers of infidelity, and endeavouring to impress his mind with a conviction of the truth of a divine revelation; but though a confirmed believer himself, he was better acquainted with the interior of religion, than qualified to defend its outworks. He had studied the Scriptures with great care, but had employed his mind about the general evidences of Christianity too little, to meet the sophistical reasonings of his sceptical companion.

The Indian Captain proudly defied the artillery of his heavy denunciations against unbelievers, and smiled at his entreating him to abandon the ranks of scepticism, in which he had enrolled himself, and to join in affinity and allegiance with the orthodox party. Citations from Scripture to prove that his principles were wrong, with him had no authority, because he disbelieved them; and demanded better evidence than mere assertion, that

the Bible was really the word of God. He found it easy, therefore, to obtain a temporary victory over his friend, and to foil a less dexterous combatant, who was sincere in his profession, but unskilful in the use of his weapons.

Captain Sims, unable to defend himself against the spirited attacks of his ingenious antagonist, wisely withdrew from the field, but left, as a substitute, a book, written by the late General Burn, entitled, "The Christian Officer's Complete Armour;" being a dialogue between a Captain and a Major, on the evidences of revelation. Of this treatise, Captain Wilson read only the title page, and finding that it related to the defence of Christianity, he returned it, after having kept it carelessly by him for a few weeks.

These conversations and discussions, however unprofitable at the time, were not without their good effects. Occasionally, and at intervals, transient convictions would strike his conscience, like the flashes of lightning that cross the path of the benighted traveller. He would sometimes indulge the reflection, that if Christianity were from God, his plan of life was altogether wrong, his estimate of himself erroneous, and his hopes of future happiness fallacious. Yet though his judgment might suggest the propriety of a candid investigation of the subject, his heart rose with indignant opposition, to admit sentiments which were at variance with the system of his whole life.

It happened that Captain Sims had invited the minister of the chapel at Portsea, (the Rev. J. Griffin) where he attended divine worship, to spend a few days with him in the country. During this short visit, he was introduced to Cap-

tain Wilson, and this seemingly accidental circumstance, not only proved the happy means of his conversion, but laid the foundation of a cordial attachment between them, that was only broken off by death. At one of their dinner parties, the topic of conversation chanced to be on the authenticity of the sacred Scriptures; and Captain Sims pleasantly remarked, that, as he had already been foiled on that subject, he referred the cause to his young friend the minister, who was better able to maintain the contest than he was.

The minister politely declined what might seem an obtrusion of his sentiments on the company, and added, that he thought the matter too serious and important for the occasion, although he was ready at all times to defend the truth, according to the best of his abilities. Captain Wilson smiled at the gravity of the clergyman, and observed, that it would be no obtrusion: "I assure you, Sir," continued he with a dogmatical air, "I am glad of the opportunity to converse on it; for I have never met with a clergyman yet, and I have conversed with several, that I could not foil in a quarter of an hour." This seemed a challenge that no man of honour could decline; and when the party broke up, the two combatants, embracing the delightful opportunity which a fine evening in July afforded, adjourned to a shady bower in the garden, there to debate the point, whether Christianity was a revelation from God.

The minister reminded him to treat the subject with all the seriousness it deserved; and very generously proposed to allow him the choice of his own mode of argument, either to object or reply, as he might find most agreeable. Captain Wilson

admitted the subject was serious, and that he intended to treat it as such ; but rather declined entering into a formal and logical mode of reasoning ; observing, that if the principal objections were removed, he was ready to acknowledge the Scriptures as the word of God ; and would endeavour to conform his principles and his conduct accordingly. He granted at once the superior excellence of Christianity, and that none of the writings of the Mahometans, the Hindoos, or the Chinese, could bear a comparison of claims to divine revelation, with those contained in the Old and New Testament ; but he thought there were difficulties connected with its evidences and its doctrines, which could not be satisfactorily explained. These it appeared to him impossible to obviate, in such a way as to produce conviction.

Being requested to state what he thought most objectionable, the following, after some deliberation, were urged as the chief reasons of his incredulity : That the Scriptures give an unlovely representation of the divine character, contrary to what appears in the works of nature,—that they increase our perplexities with respect to religion, by requiring us to believe mysteries, or truths not within the sphere of our understanding,—that what is assumed as a revelation from God to the world, and as a universal remedy for all its intellectual errors and moral evils, had not, after so many thousand years, reached one tenth part of the inhabitants of the globe,—that the magnitude of creation renders it altogether improbable that the Supreme Being has conducted himself towards the inhabitants of this comparatively insignificant spot

of the universe, in the manner the Scriptures represent him to have done,—and that Judaism and Christianity, instead of being a benefit, had been an injury to the world. These he confessed were the most weighty and formidable difficulties, and though there were others in detail, yet if these could be removed, the rest, he allowed, would have very little influence.

These objections, the reader will perceive, have been produced and re-produced by infidels in various forms, and as often refuted in the most satisfactory manner; but as it would not have answered his present design merely to make this assertion, the minister condescended to reply briefly to the several particulars, in such a way as he hoped would tend, if not fully to repel the arguments, at least to weaken their force. He stated as a general preliminary, that it was unphilosophical, and contrary to the acknowledged methods of sound reasoning, to object to the truth of a proposition, because that truth contained some principles difficult to be comprehended. Such a prejudice would be a mighty barrier to the attainment of knowledge in almost every science; in chemistry, mathematics, natural history, &c. where there are innumerable principles, the truth or reality of which is proved by incontestable evidences, although the truth itself contains first principles that cannot be explained.

This mode of objecting, he observed, would apply with equal force against Deism as against Christianity, since there were many positions in natural, as well as in revealed religion, against which similar difficulties might be urged. For example, the permission of moral evil, the providence of God,

the existence of spirit as distinct from matter, and consequently a future state of being, might all be denied on the same principle, since each of these truths have mysteries connected with them; and yet many Deists believe them, and admit the evidence by which they are proved. This therefore clearly shewed the unreasonableness of those who objected to the evidences on which revelation is founded, merely because the subject was found to contain some inexplicable difficulties.

He next replied to his objection as to the Scriptural representations of the divine character,—unloveliness and severity. He observed, that our conceptions of character are often rather pictures drawn after our own fancies or feelings, than exact resemblances of the truth; and that which is excellent in the esteem of one man, often is, in the opinion of another, quite the reverse: Thus, a disobedient son, an indolent servant, or a condemned criminal, will form their estimates as to the character of a father, a master, or a judge, very differently from a virtuous child, an industrious servant, or a loyal subject. The one will see goodness and virtue, where the other can discover nothing but harshness and severity. One who has a competent fortune, a comfortable residence, and pleasant gardens, &c. will think more favourably of the kindness and munificence of the Deity, than the slave in the mines, or the beggar who wanders on a precarious charity. If it is true, as Scripture asserts, that we are in a state of enmity and rebellion against God, is it to be wondered at if we should dislike the description he has given us of himself, or deem those features unlovely that we cannot look upon but with terror?

He shewed him, on the other hand, that they must adopt very partial and erroneous views of the divine character, who would conceive of it as all goodness and mercy; forgetting, that at the same time, to be consistent with itself and with our ideas of perfection, it must possess also the attributes of justice and holiness. These latter attributes are in Scripture associated with his goodness, in order to form a complete and perfect character. In order to apply this argument, and bring it home to the case of his opponent, the minister drew a contrast between the two systems, and left his friend to infer, which of them gave the most favourable representation of the goodness and benevolence of the Deity—that which assured us of a future state, which brought life and immortality to light, and directed us to the means of obtaining them; or that which left these momentous and interesting questions in darkness and uncertainty. “Is this then,” he asked, “a proof of the goodness of God, to leave you in a state of the most awful suspense, on subjects that so nearly concern your greatest happiness? Is this a mark of goodness, to give you the dim light of reason, which, like that of the glow-worm, only serves to make the surrounding darkness more visible; and to refuse that light which is able to dispel your darkness? To give you a conscience capable of tormenting you, without the method of having it appeased,—without knowing whether he will pardon few sins, or many, and on what conditions? And is this the system that is founded on the goodness of God? No; the subject will not bear looking at; the further you go, the more the mind is perplexed. It is revelation that gives the most lovely exhibition

of this goodness. There the doubts and fears of the anxious mind are resolved. Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel."

To this Captain Wilson had nothing to reply; but he mentioned some particular passages in the Old Testament that he could not reconcile with his ideas of the divine goodness, such as the distinction between the offerings of Cain and Abel, the command of God to the Israelites, with respect to the nations that were to be expelled from the promised land, and especially the destruction of the Canaanites. Of these the minister gave him such explanations, as satisfied him that the Scripture account was not attended with greater difficulties than any other, but the contrary; and that even as matters of fact, they appeared not to be a greater violation of justice or humanity, than the African slave-trade, which he scrupled not to reconcile with his principles.

The Captain, finding that he could make no ground on his antagonist, abandoned this point as indefensible, and retired to what he considered a more tenable position, the absurdity of Scripture requiring him to believe mysteries. The minister admitted, that the Scriptures contain a variety of truths which may be considered as mysteries; that is, which imply something in their nature, degree, or mode of existence, which lies beyond the sphere of our comprehension; not that the doctrine or truth itself is hidden, for this would be a contradiction in terms. But he contended, that these were not more mysterious than a number of principles which are commonly received by philosophers; the evidences of whose existence are so strong, that they cannot refuse their assent to them; such as

the phenomena of animal and vegetable vitality,—the formation of matter out of nothing,—the eternity and immensity of the Divine Being, which no finite mind can comprehend. “If therefore,” he concluded, “the inspired volume contains a variety of truths which lie beyond the sphere of our limited capacity, it is rather an evidence of its divine authenticity, than against it.”

The Captain was willing to allow, that he might receive some truths which he did not fully comprehend, but could never be brought to believe what was contrary to the nature of things. He instanced the doctrine of the Trinity; and added, that this was so contrary to reason, that he had hardly patience to attend to evidences which attempted to prove such an absurdity, as that three are one, and one is three; or that the book which contains such preposterous positions was the word of God.

The minister again reminded him, that the Scriptures contained some things hard to be understood, and therefore to attempt to explain what is inexplicable, would be as ridiculous as it was impossible; but this, he observed, could be no reasonable objection to our receiving a revelation from the Deity, if otherwise proved, that we could not understand the mode of his essence or existence. It was too assuming, to make our judgment of the Deity a standard by which to try the evidences of a revelation from him to man; since, upon such a principle, it would be impossible for the Divine Being to make a revelation of himself to his creatures, supposing that there was any thing in the nature of his existence, incompatible with our modes of reasoning. And as to believing nothing that is

contrary to the dictates of reason, he questioned whether, in this assertion, the Captain was quite correct. "Do you not," (said he,) "believe that God is every where present, in the most strict and philosophical sense of the word? and yet do you not as firmly believe, that there are innumerable worlds of matter in the universe, and also innumerable spirits, who are distinct, intelligent, free agents? What power of reasoning is your mind endowed with, by which it can reconcile these two opposite propositions? Can two beings, two substances, occupy exactly the same space at the same time? If you believe the other two propositions, you must also believe that they can. But is not this contrary to your mode of reasoning; or as far as your perceptions go, contrary to the nature of things?"

The doctrine of the unity of the Deity, so clearly taught in Scripture, and which appears to us now to be a self-evident position, for many ages, he told him, had to struggle with the reasonings of men before it obtained extensive belief; and even yet had not obtained universal reception. It was contrary to the reason of the ancients, seeing there were so many opposite principles in the universe, both moral and physical, that there should be but one God. The belief of a plurality of deities was general through all nations,—a fact which might serve to shew how dangerous it is, to make our ideas of the nature of the divine existence a reason for refusing to examine the claims of Scripture to be a revelation from God: since, had men always acted under the influence of this principle, the doctrine of the divine unity might still have been treated as an absurdity.

The Captain agreed that there was something

in the nature of spiritual beings that we could not understand, and seemed to perceive the absurdity of his prescribing a mode of existence to what was incomprehensible, or of making human reason the standard by which to determine the nature of the divine essence. He therefore proposed to take up his third objection to revelation, *viz.* that it had never been universally known,—a defect that rendered it, in a great measure, of no use; since it could neither be a rule of duty, nor a remedy for misery, where men had never heard of it. “It is not denied,” replied his friend, “that the want of the universal diffusion of revelation, is a serious evil to the world; but may not the objection you now urge, have been one cause of preventing its becoming universal? If your argument is valid, it never can become so; for if all men refuse to examine its claims to divine authenticity, till it is universally known, it is morally impossible it should ever be received by the whole world, for the objection would present an insuperable barrier to its general reception. This is reasoning in a circle, and terminates in absurdity: It is, in fact, to say, that it ought not to be universally received, till it is universally received.—But perhaps your objection supposes, that if God gave a revelation of his will to man, there is something in the nature of his character, and of his moral government, which would justify us in concluding, that he would at the same time make the discovery to all.”

Upon this supposition, he shewed him that his objection was quite unsupported by the analysis of the divine government; and was extremely inconsistent in a Deist, who professed to believe that God had given a discovery of himself in his

works, sufficiently intelligible to all mankind; and yet Deism was not universal, the numbers of its disciples being few, compared with Christians, and still smaller compared with heathens and idolaters. The objection ought therefore, he observed, to have no weight with him, because it applied with more than equal force against his own system. "I see no alternative for you," (he concluded), "upon your own argument, but either to admit the principles of Atheism or Paganism, or to go calmly into the evidences of Christianity."—That the Scriptures are not universally known, he informed him, was one evidence of the truth of some of the great principles which they contain; for they describe men as in a state of rebellion against their Maker, not liking to retain God in their thoughts. It was not then a matter of surprise, that men should make objections against the divine origin of a book, which prescribed rules to which they have no wish to be conformed, motives of action they never feel, and denunciations of wrath against sins to which they are strongly attached, both by inclination and habit. But it can never be an excuse to the objectors of Christianity, that it is not universally received, or that others have neglected to inquire into its authority, or refused submission to its proposals. Such a plea would rather aggravate than extenuate their criminality. In applying the argument, he begged his friend seriously to consider, that however some might plead before the tribunal of their Maker, that they never had an opportunity to investigate the claims or the doctrines of Scripture, he would not be entitled to make this plea. "Let me entreat you then," (he concluded), "patiently to examine their evi-

dences, and study their contents. I am persuaded you will not be offended with me, for using this earnestness ; since it must appear to you a species of hypocrisy in me, to profess to believe the truth and importance of revelation, and be desirous that others also should believe its divine origin, and participate in its benefits."

The Captain expressed himself obliged to his visitor for his good wishes, however unnecessary he might think them ; but dropt no remarks that could indicate what impression his arguments and earnest expostulations had made upon him. It appears, however, he could advance nothing in his own vindication, for he immediately turned the conversation towards another objection, which he drew from the extent or magnitude of creation. It seemed to him highly improbable, he said, that the inhabitants of this comparatively insignificant spot, should receive that kind of attention described in the Scriptures, since the globe we inhabit, probably bears a less proportion to the universe, than an orange bears to the solar system : When we see that the waters and the air are full of animation, and that vegetables and animals are little worlds covered with inhabitants ; is it not natural to suppose that the globes which float in the boundless extent of space around us, are also inhabited ? And when we consider that our own is the centre of a system, with planets like our earth, and some of them much larger, revolving round it ; is it not probable that the fixed stars are suns to other systems ? Now, that a Being possessed of such vast, and to us, boundless dominions, should speak and act as though all his other works were made for the inhabitants of this little spot ; and that he who

made and governs all, should unite himself with human nature, and die to restore man to happiness, seemed so much beyond the bounds of probability, that he wondered how any man of a philosophical mind could believe such things.

Before replying to this objection in detail, the minister reminded him that the whole argument was weak; and one part of his view erroneous, since Scripture nowhere represents, that all the works of God were made for the benefit of man, nor that any of them were made exclusively for his advantage. "I do not," he proceeded, "deny some of your probabilities; it may be true, that the stars are suns, and these suns have planetary systems, and these systems are all inhabited; but it may be useful to recollect, that these are only probabilities and not certainties. It is from one train of probabilities that you deduce another, so that the probabilities urged against the truth of revelation are not deductions from known parts: this to a philosopher (that is, to a man of close reasoning) must very much weaken the objections. To probability then, I would oppose probability, and thus balance your objection, or, as I think, turn the scale against it. The probabilities in favour of revelation, to be deduced from the minuteness of the works of God, are, I think, equal both in number and weight, to those which form the objection arising from the magnitude of his works."

This he illustrated, by referring to the nice adjustments in the minutest parts of the animal structure: the adaptation of the eye to light, the ear to sound, the lungs for respiration; and in short, the whole animal economy, which extended even to the smallest fly or insect. This minute attention

of the divine Being to the operations of matter, made it probable, that he is not less attentive to the operations of mind : and considering that all these arrangements are connected with animal or human happiness, the inference obviously was, that he who has been so kindly attentive to the body, had not neglected the soul ; that he who has given light for the eye, has given truth for the understanding : And seeing that the Scriptures contain principles as suited to the comfort of the mind, as food is suited to the sustenance of the body ; the probability is that these truths are from God, because there is as pleasing an adaptation between these truths and the state or condition of the human mind, as there is between food and hunger, light and the power of vision.

But the magnitude of his works suggests probabilities in favour of revelation, as well as the minuteness of them. In surveying the greatness of his power in creating such boundless works, and his astonishing wisdom in the management of them ; who can resist the persuasion that he would, for the same reasons, magnify his condescension, goodness, and mercy, by some method corresponding with that by which he has displayed his wisdom and power ; and nowhere is this so fully to be seen, as in those Scriptures which relate the history of the redemption of the world by the Son of God. This is an event which fills us with as much astonishment at his loving-kindness and tender mercy, as the vastness of his works fills us with astonishment at his power. Philosophy presents a magnificent display of the greatness of God, but the Scriptures gives us also a grand display of his goodness. Here, therefore, the probability is also in favour of revelation.

In estimating the argument from the magnitude of creation, and the comparative insignificance of man, there was one fact we ought not to lose sight of,—the superior excellence of intelligence to that of matter. The inhabitants of this earth, considered as intelligent creatures, were of more importance in the scale of being, than all the innumerable worlds of matter which God had made; and which appeared, either directly, or remotely to minister to the good of man. The demonstrations of beneficent design, therefore, arising from the works of God, were proofs in favour of the Scriptures being a revelation from him; and that he had done every thing to shew his concern for the present and future happiness of his creatures. Besides, it was enough to expose the weakness of the objection, that the whole reasoning was built altogether upon hypothesis and probability.

These arguments, though they did not appear to the Captain altogether satisfactory, or convincing, yet tended, by his own concession, to set the subject in a more favourable light. “But how do you account for it,” (said he), “that the principles of the Scriptures have done so little good in the world; and have been the cause of so much superstition, tyranny, and bloodshed?” “You appear,” said the minister, “to take these things for granted, as though they were self-evident positions; but I must beg leave to deny the statement. Christianity has done vast good in the world, and has not, properly considered, been the cause of superstition, tyranny, or cruelty. It is certainly much to be lamented, that some, for ambitious purposes, under the mask of religion, have invented superstitious observances, to divert the attention

of men from their just rights ; and have persecuted myriads with unrelenting severity, for daring to think for themselves. But I presume you will admit that this was done from political motives ; and nothing can be a stronger proof that these things cannot be fairly attributed to the principles of Christianity, than the Catholics having prohibited the people from reading the Scriptures. Who does not perceive, that had Christianity justified their conduct, they would most readily have circulated the sacred book in their own defence ?”

Nothing, he justly observed, could be more opposite to the spirit of cruelty and oppression, than the language of Christ, or the principles and examples recorded in the New Testament ; and nothing can be more uncandid, than to ascribe to Christianity, the vices and misconduct of those who have disgraced the name and profession of Christians. It must be evident to every one, that since the Scriptures have been more freely circulated, and more generally read, the state of society in Europe, and the world at large, has gradually increased in amelioration.

Here the Captain, imagining he had found in this sort of argument, a two-edged sword which he could turn with advantage upon his adversary, interrupted him ; and observed with a smile, “ you certainly have a happy knack of getting clear of a difficulty. When I object to the mystery of your principles, you refer me to your practice,—and when I refer to the bad practices of the votaries of Christianity, you refer me to your principles.” “ Notwithstanding your pleasantry,” rejoined his friend, “ I am persuaded, however indignant you feel, and not more so than I do, at the con-

duct of those who have disgraced the Christian name, by their unjust and cruel actions, you do not believe it is fairly to be attributed to the principles of Christianity. This, however, is only the negative part of the subject ; but there are, I think, strong positive evidences that the gospel has proved an extensive blessing to the world. In order to see this truth in a strong light, we should contemplate the ancient state of the world, where revelation had not reached ; and we should also compare those parts of the world now, where Christianity has not been received, with those where it has been suffered to have its unrestrained and native influence."

It could be proved, he observed, from various evidences of historical facts, that Christianity had been the cause of abolishing the practice of human sacrifices, which once prevailed both in Britain, and various parts of the Continent of Europe, where vast numbers of human beings were every year immolated, as the effect of their false religion, but the benign genius of the gospel had long since trodden down their cruel altars, and wrested from them their bloody knife. It had restored women to their proper station in society, and thus tended to render one half of the inhabitants happy ; and by them to soften the manners, and promote the happiness of the other half. The sacred institution of marriage had been sanctioned, and guarded by the Christian religion ; divorce rendered difficult and unattainable, except for high crimes ; females and children were thus protected, and the great and depopulating vices kept in check, by the laws and manners which it had diffused.

Slavery, that awful proof that man is a tyrant

to man,—that bane of human happiness,—that disgrace to civilized nations, owed its abolition in Europe, to the mild and equitable laws of Christianity. The cruel manner in which slaves were treated by the ancients, is written in lines of blood on the historic pages of almost every nation,—England, and every kingdom of the Continent, had its market for slaves as well as for cattle, till the gospel infused milder principles into their laws and usages. It is to the influence of Christianity that Europe owes its advanced state of civilization, beyond the other parts of the world; and wherever it has had the most extensive and unrestrained operation, there is the most improved and happy state of society. These, he concluded, were known and public facts, which could be accounted for on no other principles, than those enforced from the Christian revelation.

The Captain was here allowed an opportunity of offering any remarks he had to make, by way of refutation or defence; but as he remained silent, the minister began to infer, that he either found his objections giving way, or grew tired of the conversation. “I will relieve you from that suspicion,” replied the other, “for I assure you, I never was more interested in a conversation in all my life, and I should be sorry if our friends came to interrupt us: but there is one thing more I should like to have your remarks on, which has often occurred to me to be very unaccountable. If Christianity contains a divine revelation, how is it that there is such a diversity of opinions among those who believe it to be the word of God? There are as many opposite sentiments as there are pages, and almost as many sects as sentiments; how then am I to know what is right?”

This objection, his friend answered, would apply more forcibly to the system of Deists than of Christians, since the former differ among themselves as much as the latter; and though they might have a few sentiments that are fixed, the far greater part were as fleeting and mutable as the clouds; for among all the Deists that have ever written, there were not two that had agreed even upon the outlines of the system of natural religion. But he begged to remind him, that the real differences among Christians were fewer than is generally supposed. Some of the opinions in which they differed, were about such comparative trifles, that they bear no proportion to the sentiments in which they agreed. Besides, as revelation never pretended to afford supernatural powers of intellect, to preserve all who received it from the possibility of any error; but proposed its truths to the minds of men, in the state in which it found them, it could not be matter of surprise, that there should be differences of opinion on subjects so various and complicated; especially considering what a diversity of degrees there is in the strength of human reason;—what secret influence the dispositions of the heart have over the decisions of the understanding, and how deep and extensive are the prejudices of education. It should also be remembered, that many who professed to believe Christianity, were not under the influence of its doctrines; and had an interest in giving them such explanations as suited their pride, their evil passions, and worldly spirit. As to the difficulty of knowing what is right among such a diversity of sentiments, he was told that the Scriptures did not lay him under obligation to be absolutely

guided by the opinions of any; that he was to exercise his own faculties, and form his own opinions from the Scriptures themselves. If the heart, added his friend, be truly under the influence of the truths of the gospel, the judgment will not be essentially and finally wrong; and wherever men are unanimous about the spirit and temper of the gospel, and feel its influence, they can differ without disagreeing on subjects of minor importance.

As they had already spent a considerable time in this discussion, and could not expect much more leisure to prolong the debate, the minister could only advert in a very cursory manner to some of the leading particulars of the Christian evidences. He represented to him the necessity of revelation, and the inefficacy of Deism to answer all the purposes of religion; though these were stated rather as preliminaries to the grand subject of inquiry: That no better evidence than the history of the heathen world was required, to prove that a revelation from God was absolutely necessary, to make known the attributes and will of the Deity; as well as to teach the reality, and explain the nature of the divine government,—a subject denied, or misconceived by Pagans and Deists, and of which Scripture alone has given a correct and consoling view: That revelation was necessary to assure us of the reality of a future state,—to give us a decisive standard of right and wrong, to describe our duty to God, to ourselves, to our relatives, and to our neighbours: That it was necessary to satisfy the guilty and anxious mind, whether God will pardon sins, and by what evidence we may know he pardons them.

These were points essential to the happiness of man, especially to the inquisitive mind, even during health ; but more peculiarly so, in the time of affliction and of approaching dissolution. Of these, Deism could give no satisfactory answer to men's anxious anticipations of future hopes or fears. It was incapable of bringing the mind, the heart, and the conscience to a state of rest and tranquillity. It was deficient in strong and clear motives to produce a holy life ; and appeared obviously unequal to effect any extensive moral change in the state of man. The principles and conduct of avowed Deists were for the most part immoral, and unconcerned about all religion ; and the manner of their death has generally been such, as will bear no comparison with the death of a vast cloud of Christian witnesses, for unfeigned resignation, manly fortitude, or cheerful willingness to die, and a confident expectation of future felicity.

The minister next directed the attention of his convert, to the evidences arising from revelation itself, from the nature, the number, and the designs of the facts recorded in Scripture. He shewed him that if the facts were true, the doctrines could not be false ; for the principal doctrines rested on the principal facts, which were such as none but Omnipotence could have effected, and were preferred for the purpose of confirming the doctrines taught by Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament, and by Christ and his apostles in the New : That the Scripture history had been sufficiently corroborated by the writings of the ancients, and the customs and manners of Eastern nations : That the critical observations of the most profound linguists, the disquisitions of those best acquainted

with Oriental literature, the modern geographical discoveries within the sphere of sacred history, together with the deepest researches into chronology, and the most accurate astronomical calculations, all united to prove the authenticity of the Scripture facts.

The Captain here confessed, that since his return from India, on hearing his niece refer to some parts of the Bible, he had been forcibly struck with several things, which proved the Scriptures to be an Eastern book. Among other things, he remarked, that the language of one of the Psalms, where David says, *Thou anointest my head with oil, and my cup runneth over*, most likely alludes to a custom which has continued to this day. "I once, (says he) had this ceremony performed on myself, in the house of a great and rich Indian, in the presence of a large company. The gentleman of the house, poured upon my head and arms a delightfully odoriferous perfume, put a golden cup into my hand, and poured wine into it till it ran over; assuring me, at the same time, that it was a great pleasure to him to receive me, and that I should find a rich supply in his house. I think the sacred poet expressed his sense of the divine goodness, by allusion to this custom."

His friend assured him, that on a more careful perusal of the inspired writings, he would discover various other allusions to Eastern manners; and that so many historical truths, and matters of fact, united to corroborate the claims of revelation, as could not possibly meet in any imposture whatever: that observances and anniversaries had been instituted, in memory of certain transactions; which still remain the venerable memorials

of their reality : that such facts as the departure of the Israelites from Egypt,—the destroying of the first born of all the Egyptians, in memory of which the passover was kept, and by the Jews still continuing to be kept,—the dispersion of the Jews, and yet their continuing for so many ages a distinct people,—the agreement of prophecies and historical events respecting the cities of Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, and Jerusalem,—the resurrection of Christ,—the conversion of St Paul,—the gift of tongues,—the institutions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper,—and the irresistible success of the gospel, in opposition to the reasonings of the Grecian philosophers, the malignant designs of the Jews, and the systematic and persevering efforts of the Roman government,—were all such singular and unparalleled events, that it appears almost impossible for any man seriously to consider them, in connection with the truths they are designed to establish, without feeling an awe upon his spirit, and a secret conviction in his mind, that the Scriptures are the word of God.

Of the fulfilment of some of these predictions, the Captain confessed that he had himself had ocular demonstration. Besides the Jews, whose dispersion and distinct nationality for so many ages, was very remarkable, there was another people equally distinct, and whose prophetic character he had often seen verified, *viz.* the Ishmaelites.—“ I have frequently,” says he, “ had them in my service, and seen them in various situations ; but no change of place, connection, or circumstances, in the least alters their character : *Their hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against them.* Nothing can be more accu-

rate than this description, which the Bible gives us of them."

As the evening was drawing on apace, and time would not permit them to prosecute the subject at greater length, the minister, in order to strengthen the impressions which his arguments had evidently made, recommended to the Captain such books as treated on the several topics they had been discussing. A course of systematic reading, he thought best fitted to obviate all difficulties, which could not possibly be done in a hasty conversation; and to extirpate every lingering doubt that might still lurk in the dark recesses of his heart. Leland's "View of the Deistical Writers," and Halyburton's "Inefficacy of Natural Religion," were pointed out to him, as tests by which to try the efficacy of his system. He was advised likewise to peruse Ryan's "History of the Effects of Religion on Mankind;" Butler's "Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion;" Leslie's "Short Method with the Deists;" Newton "On the Prophecies;" Campbell "On Miracles;" Lardner "On the Credibility of the Gospel History;" West "On the Resurrection of Christ;" Lyttelton "On the Conversion of St Paul;" and Paley's "Horæ Paulinæ." "From these," added his friend, "your mind, I am persuaded, will receive such a refulgency of evidence, that you will as readily admit the divine authenticity of the Scriptures, as you do that light is the medium of vision, or that life is the cause of sensibility.—Before parting, I must beg leave to remind you, that of all the subjects that can possibly engage your attention, this is the most important. Be not surprised, therefore, that I feel a sincere and friendly concern that you

may believe unto eternal life ; that you may experience the happiness which I believe nothing else can afford ; and devote your life to glorify Him, who has so wonderfully preserved and prospered you." Captain Sims and their other friends now entered : "Has he convinced you?" said he, addressing himself to Captain Wilson ; " I will not say much about that," replied the other, " but he has said some things I shall never forget." Here the subject of controversy was dropt, and the evening spent in cheerful conversation.

The impression produced on Captain Wilson's mind, though it could hardly yet be said to amount to confirmation, or entire conviction, had the effect of rousing his attention to the subject. He read Major Burns' book, which he had formerly returned unopened, with the avidity with which a hungry man receives food. Every page fortified and confirmed the principles he had heard inculcated. For some days he continued to peruse the Scriptures, occasionally conversing with his niece, and the Captain of marines. She attended the Baptist Chapel at Portsea, and under pretext of obliging her, he proffered to drive her down to the place of worship on Sabbath ; but his chief object was to hear the minister, with whom he had held the late interesting conversation. He expressed himself highly delighted, with what he considered the simplicity of the worship, and the deep interest the congregation appeared to take in it. But the text was rather unfavourable for disarming the prejudices of one who had objected to the mysterious doctrines of Christianity. It was chosen from the eighth chapter of the Romans, and treated of the subject of predestination,—a subject

which, in whatever view it is taken, is not unattended with difficulties.

The preacher, who naturally felt anxious, when on entering the pulpit, he perceived an unexpected hearer in his late adversary, and would gladly have changed the subject; had the good fortune, however, not only to steer wide of any thing like offensive or obnoxious sentiments, but he illustrated his knotty text in such a manner, that the Captain ever after regarded it as highly instrumental in his conversion to God. Notwithstanding the dark and unpromising theme, the doctrine was presented to him in such a light, as roused his soul to a sense of his danger, and constrained him to seek in earnest, for pardoning mercy and divine teaching. He listened to it with a fixed attention, which could not escape observation. It seemed to produce a conflict of feelings in his breast, like what we may conceive to have been the conflict of the primary elements of nature, when blended in chaos; each striving to obtain its situation and influence in the universe. His memory, reason, conscience, imagination, and passions, were all in agitation. His prejudices for and against the doctrine, his hopes and fears, his love and hatred, raised a storm in his soul, which he could not subdue; for while his heart rose in rebellion against the sovereignty of God, the events of his whole life appeared before him, as incontestable evidences of its truth. The silent tears which he endeavoured to suppress, and which he was afraid to wipe off lest he should attract notice, excited in the bosom of his friend, feelings of benevolent and sympathetic joy.

When the service was ended, he declined giving any opinion, and shewed a reluctance to enter into

conversation on the subject; but when alone, he felt discomposed, and agitated with reflections, though he scarcely knew to what he should attribute them: at one time he was angry with himself, for allowing his feelings to carry him away; again, he thought it could be nothing else than the impressions of the Deity upon his mind, or the coincidence of the principles explained in the sermon, with the circumstances of his life. He was thus alternately agitated by speculations on the truths he had heard, and by the emotions they had excited. While reason and conscience, on the one hand, suggested that he ought patiently to investigate the matter, and if found to be truth, then to embrace and acknowledge it; the notion of enthusiasm on the other, and the dread of becoming an object of ridicule, returned with increased force, and determined him to resist the current. The painful remembrance of former sins, and the fearful apprehensions of futurity, recurred to aggravate this internal conflict. On their way home, he appeared very serious; and observed to his niece, "If what I have heard to-day be true, I am a lost man." With great affection she began to present the bright side of Christianity to his mind, assuring him that he would soon find more pleasure in believing it, than he had ever found from the world.

He now became exceedingly pensive and thoughtful; the Bible and religious books formed his constant, and almost his only companions. He attended regularly and punctually the place of worship, joined with fervour in the service, and seemed wholly absorbed in the inquiry, *What shall I do to be saved?* This change in his principles

he soon manifested to his acquaintance, by a change in his habits. But though he was ardent and sincere in his desires for eternal life, still he imagined he might believe in Christianity, without altogether renouncing the world; as he was acquainted with many who, though they professed to be zealous Christians, yet mingled in gay society, without losing or impairing their religious impressions. He was persuaded, therefore, that it was not necessary to abandon his former associates; and that he might frequent their company, with a view to their religious improvement, without going all the accustomed lengths of gaiety. For a time he accepted their invitations, and received their visits; but endeavoured to carry his purpose into execution, by making every entertainment subservient to their spiritual edification. With one, he would converse on the truth of the Bible, and the necessity of practising what it enjoins. With another, he would speak of the sin and folly of swearing, and taking the Lord's name in vain. To a third, he represented the importance and sanctity of the Sabbath, and the guilt of not keeping it holy. To some of the loquacious ladies, he hinted some doubts whether all the anecdotes they related of their neighbours were quite correct, and whether they might not bear a more favourable construction than they gave them. On some occasions, he even ventured to mention the certainty of death, judgement, and a future state; and to make allusions and applications, intimating that he thought it their duty to consider on those subjects.

For a while he supposed, from the silence with which he was heard, that his conversations had made some useful impression, and that this inti-

macy might be continued with advantage ; but he soon found that his gay associates profited little by his exhortations, and only wanted an opportunity to rally their forces, and turn the current of ridicule against him. One remarked, from the solemn cast of his countenance, that he was surely very ill, and about to die,—another thought him excellently qualified for the Methodist Chapel,—another took the Lord's name in vain, and then apologized. The lady he had questioned, as to the correctness of her reports against some who were not of her party, had no doubt but he would soon turn parson, and that she would see him with a white wig on a white horse ; while a witty officer kept the company, for an hour at a time, in a roar of laughter, by relating a number of amusing anecdotes about the Puritans and Methodists.

The Captain found the artillery of wit which he had often poured on others, now returned on himself. He frequently tried to stem the torrent by argument ; at other times he attempted to go with it, by joining in the laugh till it had spent itself, but all in vain. They were resolved either to rout him out of his strange notions, or to laugh him out of their society ; but as they could not do the former, they gradually accomplished the other, by breaking off the connection. This convinced him at length, that it is impossible to serve two masters,—that there is no communion between light and darkness,—and that a faithful and sincere Christian is constrained to come out from among the world, and to be separate. But though one class of society shunned his acquaintance, he soon found that another as eagerly courted it. Many rejoiced to hear of his conversion, were solicitous

for his spiritual welfare, and cheerfully aided his mind in its researches after evangelical and experimental truth.

As he had now much leisure, he occupied his time chiefly in reading, and in receiving occasional visits from his minister. Most of the principal works on the evidences of Christianity, he studied with great attention; until he had obtained such a firm persuasion of the truth of revelation, as to declare that nothing in the world, not even Satan, with all his principalities and powers, could persuade him that the Bible was not the word of the Most High; neither could any thing have weaned him from his errors, so completely as that precious volume had done. He read the Scriptures daily with better understanding, and with increased delight.

Like most young Christians, however, his faith was occasionally obscured, and his soul involved in doubt and despondency. Reflection and self-examination taught him to discover in himself many deficiencies. Sometimes he began to question, whether his knowledge were not merely theoretical, the effect of human, instead of divine teaching: whether his pleasures in religion were not the excitements of mere human passions, instead of the exercise of pure and heavenly affections: whether his confidence in the divine promises were not presumption, and his zeal for God the mere offspring of novelty or self-applause. But time, the corrector of mistakes, and a proper course of reading, soon relieved his mind from its perplexities, and gave him clearer views of the warrant of faith, and the nature of Christian experience. Though he perceived that the sanctification of the

Spirit forms the evidence of our meetness for heaven, and is as essentially necessary to salvation, as an interest in the justifying righteousness of Christ ; he likewise saw that the atonement of the Redeemer, and the promises of God, constitute the foundation of our hopes of acceptance with him. On this basis, he was enabled to build the superstructure of his faith, hope, and practice ; and when the evidences of grace became weak and indistinct, he had recourse to these first principles, to revive and strengthen them.

Early in the year 1796, he was admitted a member of the congregation at Portsea, where he gave diligent and exemplary attendance, although his residence was ten miles from the place of worship. As he was naturally of an active and benevolent turn of mind, and perceived clearly that the design of God in imparting divine grace to the heart, was not only to save the individual, but to make him the means of saving others, it began to be a subject of considerable anxiety with him, and even an evidence of his being a true Christian, whether, and how far his faith would induce him to exercise this benevolence in behalf of others : And to such reflections as these, is to be ascribed the reason for his offering himself to the Missionary Society, to conduct their first expedition to the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

The thought is said to have originally occurred to his mind, from a sermon which he had heard on the faith of Abraham, in leaving his country and his friends at the call of God, not knowing whether he went. While meditating on the subject in his own garden, and reviewing other circumstances of the Patriarch, he was much affected at

the wonders wrought by faith ; and admired the devotedness and self-denial of the worthies recorded by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. These contemplations led him to contrast his own faith with theirs, and to ask the question, whether, if called in providence to suffer or to serve like them, he could as readily give up all for Christ, and go forth at the divine bidding ?

In a few weeks an opportunity seemed to offer, of putting the strength of his principles to the test. He observed in the Evangelical Magazine, an account of a design to form a Missionary Society in London, and to convey the gospel, if possible, to the islands in the South Seas. He approved of the project, and it struck his mind very forcibly, whether, if he were called upon to take the command of the expedition, he could freely devote himself to the service, and embark once more on the deep ; not in quest of worldly substance, but to carry to heathen lands, treasures more valuable than the gold of nations. He felt at the moment that he could do it with pleasure ; he perceived his faith equal to the sacrifice ; that he could quit his present comforts, encounter the perils of the ocean, and brave all the dangers and difficulties to which such an enterprise must necessarily expose him.

He determined to accompany his minister to the general meeting of the Hampshire Association of Ministers, to be held at Salisbury ; for the purpose, among other objects, of deciding on the intended mission, and promoting its accomplishment. But the result tended rather to damp and discourage his zeal ; for although they were unanimously in favour of the missionary attempt, and

highly applauded his desire to promote so glorious a cause, they could entertain but little hopes that his services would ever be required; as it seemed to them improbable that a ship would ever be employed solely for that purpose.

A brighter prospect, however, soon opened up. The first general Missionary Meeting was announced to take place at London, in order to consult what steps were proper to be pursued, at the commencement of so great an undertaking. The Captain resolved to make one of the party. He listened with serious attention to the discourses and speeches that were delivered on the occasion; and their deliberations not only met with his cordial approbation, but had the effect of fully deciding his mind on the subject. He solicited an interview with one of their leading members, which he readily obtained. After some conference concerning the mission, he intimated with great modesty and diffidence, but with a firm decision of purpose, that if the Society could not find a better conductor, which he wished and hoped they might, the service should not be impeded for lack of nautical skill, and that he was ready, without any other reward than the satisfaction resulting from the service, to devote himself to the work, whatever inconvenience to himself it might be attended with.

A letter was immediately addressed to the president of the meeting, in the Captain's name, offering his services to the Society. A committee of the Directors was appointed to converse with him. They were equally charmed with his modesty, ability, zeal, and devotedness of heart to the work; and concurred in opinion, that nothing

could tend more powerfully to the accomplishment of their designs, than having such a man to command the vessel that should convey the missionaries to the place of their destination. It seemed to them an omen of success, that God was thus raising up, in different places, men unknown to each other, for the fulfilment of his own gracious purposes towards the heathen. The offer was therefore embraced by the committee with delight, and seemed to animate their confidence, that God would provide all other necessary means for the equipment and execution of the enterprise.

The Captain was next presented to the Directors, and his demeanour at once confirmed the reports they had heard of his character, and his fitness for the service in which he had volunteered. It was their unanimous opinion, that a man more highly qualified for the task could not be hoped for, if they had sought the whole island. They found him in all his manners a gentleman—a mien that was commanding—an age yet in the vigour of manhood, with the maturity of experience—and withal, an amiable diffidence that seemed only conquerable by the calls of the mission, and the deep impressions resting on his own heart. After the lapse of a few months, which were spent in seeking out and examining missionaries, providing funds, and taking other preparatory measures, Captain Wilson was informed of the resolution the Society had come to, of making the attempt in a ship to be purchased by themselves, and requesting him to undertake the command.

The affair having arrived at this state of maturity and decision, the Captain sold his house at Horndean, fixed his niece in London, and went

thither himself to superintend and forward the necessary preparations. He sought out and purchased a proper vessel, which cost £5000; engaged the mariners, and took an active share in every thing connected with his department. The ship, which was called the *Duff*, was manned by three principal officers, besides a gunner, carpenter, steward, and sail-maker, fifteen sailors, and the Captain; most of whom made a profession of being under the influence of Christian principles. In her were embarked, four ordained ministers, a surgeon, with twenty-five other missionaries, or settlers who had for the most part been employed in business or mercantile engagements, highly necessary to impart the principles and habits of civilization to the South Sea Islanders. Besides these, there were six women, wives of some of the missionaries, and three children.

Several of the Directors visited the ship, and crowds of pious people, who left a variety of presents, either for the missionaries or for the natives. The zeal of Captain Wilson burned with all the fervour of a first impression; and he declared himself astonished, after what he had seen and heard, that none of the prominent ministers in London should offer to go as missionaries. He was equally surprised that any, who were not absolutely bound by circumstances, and had felt the power of truth, and knew the state of the heathen world, could quietly remain in England, while millions abroad were perishing for lack of knowledge.

The novelty of the scheme, and the publicity given to the whole proceedings, excited a very general and lively interest in their design. It was

a new event in the Protestant Church, for an expedition to be wholly employed in conveying the messengers of divine truth to the most distant part of the globe. By this means, the attention and the benevolence of the public were attracted, in a manner such as they never could have been, had the Society been more limited and private in this first outset of its operations. It was of immense importance to the Missionary cause, that they should commence on such a scale, and with an embassy so well calculated to excite an interest in the religious world: And to this partly may be ascribed that universal diffusion of the missionary spirit, which has since imparted its energies to so large a portion of Christendom, and lighted up a sacred flame, which has not only continued to blaze in England, but spread to many of the churches on the continents of Europe and America.

Whether the islands in the South Seas were the most eligible spot that could have been pitched upon for making this experiment, it is needless now to inquire; yet it cannot be denied, that the situation possessed many advantages. Their extreme distance, and the glowing, and even exaggerated descriptions of them, which represented them as equalling, in natural charms, all that the imagination conceives of the Elysian fields, or the primeval paradise, threw an air of adventure and romantic anticipation over the enterprise, that tended to increase the popularity of the subject. The station was, besides, one that could create no jealousy or opposition, nor give the smallest possible offence to our own or to any other government, or national church upon earth. Perhaps there was no other place to which the attention and energetic opera-

tions of the Society could have been directed, at that perturbed period of the world, without exciting alarm or opposition from some quarter or other.

The character of the mission, and the object which it professed, soon dispelled any unfavourable suspicions that might have been entertained against it, and obtained for its agents and its transactions, not merely public confidence, but even official patronage and protection. In producing this effect, the conduct of Captain Wilson,—his skill as a navigator,—his prudence in presiding among the missionaries,—and his success in the voyage, it must be admitted, contributed in no small degree. He certainly had an arduous task to perform,—such as made several aged and experienced Christians tremble for the ark of God, and the event of the expedition. He had duties to discharge, which required great diversity of talents, and even opposite qualifications. Among the sailors, he had to maintain authority and command, and yet conduct himself towards them as a brother in Christ. Among the missionaries, he had to superintend their arrangements, and preside in their meetings and debates. His authority on the quarter-deck, was here to be softened down into Christian meekness, and the character of commander, exchanged for that of a counsellor and a friend. Such a situation required great firmness and decision of mind, and yet much real kindness and pliability of temper.

On the 10th of August, 1796, the expedition sailed from the river Thames, having for their flag, hoisted at the mizen-top-gallant-mast-head, three doves argent, on a purple field, bearing olive branches

in their bills. At Spithead, where the Captain joined her and took the command, they were detained, waiting for wind or convoy for some weeks. On the 23d of September, the convoy being at length ready, the *Duff*, in company with more than fifty others, weighed anchor; wafted by propitious winds, and under the auspices of the effectual fervent prayers of many thousands of British Christians. The Captain was furnished, by the Directors, with an excellent Letter of Instructions, by which he was to regulate his conduct, as far as it might be expedient, both with respect to the voyage itself, and also with relation to the establishment of the mission. Although Otaheite was the place destined for making the first attempt, their plan embraced a field of much greater extent. The Friendly Islands, the Marquesas, the Sandwich, and the Pelew Islands, were specified as coming within the limits of their enterprise, and as being desirable stations for planting the knowledge of the gospel.

Within six days after her departure, the *Duff* passed the Island of Madeira; on the 14th of October, she touched at St Jago; and on the 12th of November, she cast anchor in the harbour of Rio de Janeiro. The officers, missionaries, and whole ship's company were in perfect health; their conduct had been in every respect pleasing; and all entertained the most sanguine hopes of success. After receiving a plentiful supply of provisions, they left that port on the 19th; but finding it impossible, from tempestuous weather, to beat round Cape Horn, they bore away to the eastward, to go by the Cape of Good Hope, and after nearly circumnavigating the globe, they

landed at Otaheite, after a voyage of five months, on the 4th of March, 1797 ; where they were received in the most friendly manner.

This island, as well as most of the others which are spread over the vast expanse of the Southern Ocean, had, thirty years previous to the arrival of the *Duff*, been repeatedly visited by Europeans, who were traversing those unexplored regions, either for the purpose of enlarging the boundaries of science, or with the hope of discovering new and promising fields for commercial speculation. With one or other of these objects in view, a succession of adventurers, among whom were Wallis, Cook, Bligh, and Edwards, besides several Continental navigators, had paid occasional visits, and kept up a friendly intercourse with these remote islanders ; although the only return they received for their attachment, appears to have been a knowledge of some of the arts and vices of civilized life ; and the communication of diseases that had diminished, and seemed to threaten the extinction of the whole race. A nobler object had engaged the attention of the present expedition. They came to communicate the word of life ; the greatest blessing, and the most inestimable gift that was ever imparted to mankind. It was not avarice or science that had attracted them to these distant shores ; but the desire of repairing the injuries and miseries which Europeans had partly occasioned, of presenting them with a remedy against their moral and spiritual degradation, and saving their souls as well as their bodies from destruction.

The missionaries, before landing, had made all necessary arrangements, and separated themselves into divisions, according to their respective sta-

blishments. Eighteen were allotted for Otaheite, ten for the Friendly Islands, and two for the Marquesas. Those destined for Otaheite, were immediately provided by the chiefs with suitable accommodations. Nothing could have exceeded the kindness and attention of the natives. Their deportment was frank and peaceful. Every day they attended worship, and listened with seriousness to such addresses as their instructors were able to make to them, through an interpreter.

As soon as they were fixed in permanent and commodious settlements, the *Duff* sailed for the Friendly Islands, and on the 9th of April they made the harbour of Tongataboo. Here the missionaries disembarked, and it was their good fortune to be received with the same respectful and hospitable treatment; they were taken under the protection of the government; a house and a portion of land was furnished them, and no attempts were made to molest either their persons or their properties. The remainder of the mission proceeded on their voyage to the Marquesas; leaving their brethren perfectly content with their situation, and thankful for the kind reception they had experienced from the natives. At this place, the last two of the brethren were settled; and though there was not here the same appearance of comfort and fertility as in the other islands, they experienced an equal degree of respect and kindness from the inhabitants.

Having now established the missionaries in their respective destinations, Captain Wilson returned once more to Otaheite, anxious to know in what circumstances he might find the brethren whom he had settled there. The report he heard was in

every respect pleasing. They had in general enjoyed good health ; the natives had constantly observed the same respectful behaviour towards them as at first, and had never failed a day to supply them with abundance of provisions ; as to the success of their religious labours, it was a point of which they could not yet say much more than that appearances were encouraging. Before taking his final departure from the South Seas, he again visited the other stations, where he had also the satisfaction of learning, that no threatening danger, and no material obstacle had occurred, to oppose the glorious design in which they were engaged ; but that a door for preaching the word throughout these extensive islands was opened to them, even by unexpected and improbable means.

Thus was the first expedition of the Missionary Society, crowned with a success beyond what they had ventured to anticipate, and which far exceeded their most sanguine expectations. During the whole of their extended voyage, they lost not a single individual, and scarcely ever had a sick list. After traversing more than twice the circumference of the globe, passing through climates so different, amidst shoals, reefs, and hidden rocks, they not only escaped dangers and indispositions, but arrived at the various destinations, in better health than when they quitted their native shores. By this experiment, the way was opened up, into the innumerable groups that cover the Southern Ocean ; and the facilities for extending the missionary labours, greatly increased. The foundations thus laid, succeeding adventurers have built upon with advantage. The seeds of knowledge then planted have struck root, and spread with all their happy

effects, over a great portion of these unenlightened regions. New and vast countries around them have become accessible, and afforded an inexhaustible field for the most vigorous exertions of Christian zeal.

Before finally quitting the islands, Captain Wilson received several, both general and individual testimonies, of the affection and gratitude of the missionaries. From Tongataboo, the last island that he visited, he received at his departure, a very kind and complimentary letter, expressive of the grateful sense they entertained of the many friendly and endearing offices he had rendered them, in course of their long and successful voyage. On the 7th of September, they left Tongataboo, and proceeded, according to their letter of instructions, on their way to Canton, which they reached about the 14th of November. Here Captain Wilson met with considerable ridicule from his old Indian acquaintances, on account of his religious enthusiasm. The singularity of the manners of the officers, and ship's crew, likewise excited observation. All immorality being utterly discountenanced, not an oath heard, and an unusual devotion maintained, induced those who witnessed this extraordinary conduct, to signalize the *Duff*, by calling her, *The Ten Commandments*. They left China on the 3rd of December, and after touching at the Cape of Good Hope, St Helena, &c. they arrived in safety in the river Thames, on the 10th of July, 1798; after being wafted from place to place, in a most wonderful manner, and having sailed nearly 50,000 miles, in little more than one year and nine months.

The return of the *Duff*, and her successful voyage,

excited an unusual degree of interest, and of gratitude to God, among the friends of the Missionary Society; while the admiration at the conduct of the Captain, was the subject of almost universal conversation. On her arrival, the fervour of pleasing emotion glowed in every bosom, and darted from individual to individual, like an electric shock. A day of public thanksgiving was appointed by the Society, in gratitude for the singular interposition of providence, from beginning to end of this remarkable expedition. As a token of their respect for the Captain, and as a lasting memorial to his family, an elegant representation of his public interview with the King and Queen of Otaheite, was painted, and presented to him by the directors. His friend, Dr Haweis, one of the founders, and a most zealous promoter of the Institution, complimented him with a diamond ring of considerable value, accompanied with the following note:—"Anxious for your arrival, I had prepared the following little token. I wish to couple my name with yours. The circle is an emblem of the eternity I hope to spend with you. The brilliant is not brighter than my affections, nor the gold purer than my friendship. Wear me on your heart; while mine beats, it will remember you, and bless God for you."

A narrative of the voyage, drawn up from their several journals, under the superintendence of a committee of the directors appointed for the purpose, was immediately published, and dedicated to the King. To it was prefixed a scientific discourse of the geography and history of the South Sea Islands, where the missionaries had settled; together with a detailed account of the natural and

civil state of Otaheite, from original documents. The Society obtained £2000, for the copy-right of this volume; of which 12,600 copies were printed, of the first edition. This sum, together with £4100, received from the East India Company, for freight of teas from China, and the value of the ship, greatly reduced the expenses of the voyage; which, including the outfit of the missionaries, furnishing them with books and implements, conveying them to their several destinations over half the globe, and settling them comfortably with ample stores in the islands, did not exceed £140, for each individual.

After Captain Wilson's return from the South Seas, he resided in London for some time; his niece having again resumed the superintendence of his domestic concerns. The effects of a sedentary life, after a long sea voyage, soon manifested themselves in a very serious bilious attack, which indicated a morbid affection of the liver, and in his own opinion threatened his life. In this state of body, however, he possessed great patience and comfort of mind. He felt that he had lived to accomplish an important object, and he was therefore not unwilling to die; but He who had fixed the bounds of his habitation, added nearly twenty years more to his life, though he was frequently annoyed by renewed attacks of the same disease.

The conspicuous part he had acted, might, had he inclined, have given him a commanding influence among the religious societies in London; yet being naturally diffident of his own opinion, on subjects not within the range of his immediate profession; and perhaps not sufficiently inured to the free discussions and unrestrained animadversions

of popular meetings, in this land of liberty, so uncongenial with the habits and manners of an East India merchant, he found the storms of protracted debates, a sphere of action not suited to his talents and disposition, and therefore preferred retirement to the bustle and business of official life. He was chosen, from time to time, on the direction of the affairs of the Missionary Society, but did not make a point of attending, unless when he thought his mercantile, geographical, or nautical knowledge could be turned to advantage; and then he never withheld his presence or his opinions, whenever his health would admit of his attendance.

The celebrity he had acquired, greatly widened the circle of his friends and connections; and among other families of worth to whose acquaintance it introduced him, was that of Richard Holbert, Esq. of Denmark-Hill, Camberwell; a gentleman of very ample fortune, and who had only one child, a pious and amiable daughter. This lady Captain Wilson married, in 1799, and found in her to his latest day, a most tender and affectionate wife. With her he got a considerable addition to his fortune, which was deemed by many, a providential compensation for the noble sacrifice of time and property he had made, in the missionary voyage.

Circumstances occurred, however, which taught him an experimental lesson, on the mutability and uncertainty of human possessions; and tended to wean his heart from placing an undue attachment on gifts merely temporal and earthly. He had, from motives of pure benevolence, and a friendly concern for promoting the interests of some of his relatives engaged in mercantile life, advanced,

on various occasions, to the amount of many thousand pounds. These sums, from the pecuniary embarrassments of the times, and the failures of the British merchants in the shipments to South America, were all swallowed up in adventurous and unsuccessful speculations.

Though these losses, on the whole little short of £30,000, deprived him of none of the comforts of life, or the means of making a respectable appearance in society; for, through the kindness of a munificent providence, he still possessed sufficient fortune for his children, in the right of Mrs Wilson; yet they tried his mind in a very considerable degree, not only on his own account, but also on account of those friends and relations who had partaken of his kindness; and from whom he now found himself compelled, in a great measure, to withhold his benevolence. They led him to examine, and to know more thoroughly his own character, which he often lamented he had not studied with sufficient care. They furnished instructive views of the dispensations of providence, by shewing how easily God can return to his people a hundred-fold in this life, for what they do for his cause; and how easy it is for him to take it again, when he pleases. Few lives could have impressed this truth more clearly and forcibly than his, which was subject to so many changes, disasters, and reverses. "In how many ways, (he observes) has God taught me my dependence upon him. All I possessed was by his special gift; and the same hand which had given, or rather lent, hath a right to take it again. He saw this was the most effectual way to humble my spirit, to wean me from the world, and to

bring me nearer to himself; and I trust he has done it."

In these reflections, the Captain alludes to the two points in his character, which were considered by his friends, as the most exceptionable; for none are without their faults, and to have described him as such, would, in the esteem of all that know human nature, even in its most improved state, have tended to discredit the whole account. His temper was naturally reserve, and though softened and rendered affable by divine grace, yet at times it partook of something bordering on hauteur. Of this he was himself sensible, and it was to him the cause of much sorrow and regret. This, however, was subdued, and more than counter-balanced by his noble feelings of kindness and generosity.

Another shade, which his friends alleged to mingle with the general excellence of his character, was a little too much attachment to the wealth of this world; and a want of a sufficient sense of his obligation to God, by not devoting a larger proportion of his property to the support of religion. It is a question of conscience, perhaps not very easily determined, what is the exact portion of their income, which the richer members of the church of Christ ought to appropriate to the cause of religion, or of charity. There is no fixed rule that can hold universally, or even individually; the liberality of the wealthier classes, in the cause of God, must very often be regulated by the importance of the object, or the particular exigency of the occasion. Captain Wilson was guided very much by this principle. He did not circumscribe his benevolence within the limits of stated rules, or methodical calculations; but left his benefactions

to depend principally upon the number, or the nature of the demands made upon him.

The charge of penuriousness, however, can hardly with propriety be alleged against him, when it is considered that he had lost, to a considerable amount, by the adventurous speculations of others,—that he had a young family to provide for,—and that from the general report of his possessing a very large fortune, the friends of religion were led to form too sanguine hopes, and to expect from him donations or annuities for pious purposes, corresponding in some measure with his riches, and his former distinguished zeal in the service. The calamity above referred to, greatly abridged his resources ; and prevented him at his death from leaving any bequest, as a token of his concern for that Society and cause, to which he had contributed so much by his personal exertions. Had the commercial enterprise, in which so large a share of his fortune was embarked, been successful, there seems no reason to doubt that his liberality would have kept pace with his zeal, and that the Missionary cause would have had to enroll his name among the number of its testamentary benefactors.

His family afflictions, and frequent personal indispositions, produced retired and domestic habits ; and though he was not prominent in any of the associations in the metropolis, for general usefulness, yet he improved his retirement to the benefit of his personal religion. His reading did not partake of an extensive range of subjects, but it was well employed on those of theology ; he not only read, but studied the Scriptures. The word of God was his companion. Part of the day he employed in committing certain portions of it to me-

mory, and another part to a repetition of them, as he walked or rode to town, or occupied himself in his garden. He had in this manner learned to repeat, with perfect accuracy, a great part of the Psalms of David,—many chapters of the prophecies, and of the gospels,—and several entire epistles of the New Testament. The account he gives of this extraordinary practice is: That when he had arrived at the age of forty-six, and had begun to experience a failure of sight, the idea struck him, that he might perhaps become wholly unable to read the sacred volume. Under this impression, he set himself to learn by heart whole chapters, and even books; which he rehearsed in his solitude, whether at home or abroad, in set portions every day. In course of a week, he would repeat all he had learned; and by this means he retained what he had previously acquired, and still continued adding something to the store. The pleasure and advantage of this, he felt when laid on a sick-bed; and when incapable of reading, he drew from those sacred treasures an inexhaustible fund of consolation.

By this means he obtained a most familiar acquaintance with Scripture, and a great richness in experimental religion. His conversation with his intimate friends, was highly instructive and animating. His religious feelings were kept so much alive by this profitable train of meditation, and frequent prayer, that he felt considerable reluctance to company; as he was often disappointed in not meeting with a correspondent disposition in others, to converse on spiritual subjects.

Towards the close of 1813, his health had begun visibly to suffer by the encroachments of an

internal distemper. No very alarming symptoms, however, at first appeared; but as weeks and months revolved, it was impossible not to observe the change which increasing disease had made on his frame and appearance. In the month of February, he was unable to appear in his usual manner, as a worshipper in the sanctuary of God. He had cherished a steady attachment to the ordinances of religion, and his punctual attendance at divine worship, as well as his humble, unassuming deportment there, were attested by all who knew him. This incapacity, and unavoidable detention from the courts of Zion, were to him the subject of much uneasiness and regret.

His last illness was painful and protracted, but he bore it with great patience and fortitude. Though many wearisome nights were appointed to him, not a murmuring word was heard to escape his lips. "I would as soon die," he observed, "at this time, as any other, if it were not on account of these ties," (alluding to his wife and children), "but the Lord is all-sufficient; I can trust them in the hands of that God who has been my God." He justified the Sovereign Disposer of events in his dealings towards him, and was rather inclined to enlarge on the subject of his mercies, than his afflictions. The intervals of repose or alleviation which he enjoyed, he occupied with those thoughts and exercises of piety, that were suited to the dispensation under which he was placed, and to the prospects that were opening before him, in unparalleled grandeur and awful solemnity. "I marked," says one, who was an eye-witness, and a near observer of the operations of his mind at this critical juncture, "in the first place, a deep and

anxious investigation into the state of his soul. He debated the matter of his personal religion, as in the sight and under the immediate eye of God. Considering the ease with which a man may deceive himself, and impose upon others, by an empty and unprofitable form of godliness, he was desirous of availing himself of every assistance in ascertaining the truth of his condition. He engaged seriously in examining the grounds and evidences of his own conversion, fearing lest he should take too much for granted, or regard a change of sentiment and a reformation of manners, as conversion; without the inbeing of that spiritual life, and those concomitant fruits of the Spirit, which the Scriptures represent as indispensable.

Habituated daily and familiarly to converse with death, he would talk to those who occasionally visited him, with as much calmness of his departure from the world, as of any transaction to which he had been accustomed while in it. His faith was strong and unwavering, and swallowed up every fear. The exercise of this holy principle, moreover, was not restricted to the concerns of his own soul, but extended likewise to those of his family. He would pray earnestly for them; and expressed a strong desire that they might be trained up in Scriptural sentiments, and thus brought to the knowledge of Christ: but it was evident he had no disquieting care concerning them, and no prevailing wish to continue with them. The cords of earthly attachment were all loosened, and the willing spirit waited, without perturbation, the signal for its flight.

In this state of readiness for the hour of his departure, he would sometimes express himself dis-

appointed, when the morning light returned, and beheld him still in this vale of tears ; and especially when the revolving Sabbath witnessed those conflicts on earth, which he longed to exchange for the rest and the triumph of heaven. Surveying the wastes of disease in his emaciated frame, he exclaimed, " What a different body will this be in the morning of the resurrection, if I am found in Christ ! I hope I shall be enabled to wait with patience till my change come. I am not afraid to trust my all in the hands of the despised Nazarene."

His nights, which for the most part were sleepless, he passed in prayer, and in the recollection of those passages of Scripture that were familiar to his mind. He informed an old friend, who kept watch at his bed-side, that he had repeated, in continuation, on one of those occasions, the Epistle to the Hebrews, from the first to the eleventh chapter inclusive ; and he believed without the omission of a single verse. It is especially worthy of observation, that he derived the utmost solace and refreshment from the many portions of sacred writ which he had committed to memory. And from a personal experience of the benefit accruing from such a familiar acquaintance with the Bible, he enjoined it upon his children, and recommended to his young friends in general, to copy his example in this respect ; only to begin much earlier than he did.

Until within two or three hours of his dissolution, he was blest with the continuance of his intellectual faculties ; when the powers of nature being completely exhausted, the unfettered spirit was allowed to take its joyful flight. • Contem-

plating his undisturbed and tranquil exit, it may be truly and emphatically said, "The end of that man was peace." This event took place on Friday, August 12, 1814. The Captain was in the fifty-fourth year of his age; he left a widow, a son, and four daughters, to lament his loss.

The life and death of Captain Wilson furnish to every serious mind, matter for much profitable reflection. The whole of his eventful history, discovers a beautiful and interesting development of the procedure of divine Providence; which appears mysterious, yet wise in its operations,—often afflictive in its events, yet kind in its designs,—the minutest parts accurately arranged, and all, like the seasons of the year, terminating in some grand and beneficial result. The storms of commercial life, the tranquillity of domestic retirement, the blasts of temporal adversity, the beams of prosperity, religious friendships, and family afflictions, all concurred in fitting him for an instrument of good, or in promoting his final and everlasting welfare. Who would have looked, as Dr Haweis says, for a convert in a haughty unprincipled Indian merchant; or for the commander of a Christian mission, in an infidel sailor chained in a prison at Seringapatam? Who could expect the Deist, who returned from India contradicting the faith of Christ, and blaspheming the cause of the cross, within five years afterwards on the quarter-deck, in the midst of prayer and praise, carrying the everlasting gospel to the Isles of the Pacific Ocean? Yet such are the mysterious ways of providence, such the irresistible influence of truth, and such the power and efficacy of Christian principles.

SOAME JENYNS.

SOAME JENYNS, a gentleman of learning and abilities, and an elegant and miscellaneous writer, ranks among the number of distinguished laymen, who have volunteered their services in the cause of revelation. In his younger days, his mind had by some means, been warped aside to the paths of infidelity, in which he continued to wander for many years. Like other disciples of that fashionable creed, he was not sparing in the avowal of his sentiments; but time and reflection brought him to a sense of his folly; and by duly exercising the powers of his reason, he arrived at those convictions which not only reclaimed him from his errors, but drew from him a very popular and useful tract in defence of Christianity.

MR JENYNS was born in Great Ormond Street, London, on the 1st of January, 1704. He used wittily to observe, that he considered himself at liberty to choose his birth-day, as he came into the world exactly at twelve o'clock at night; and accordingly he preferred dating his existence from the commencement of the new year, which in all civilized countries was celebrated as a day of general festivity. He was the only son of Sir Roger Jenyns, who was descended from the ancient and respectable family of that name, at Churchill, in

Somersetshire. Sir Roger's country residence was at Ely, and afterwards at Bottisham-Hall, near Cambridge; where he spent much of his time, in the performance of such civil duties as became his station. He bore the character of an upright and diligent magistrate, was a constant encourager of industry, and laboured much in carrying into execution the draining of the great level of the fens. His services and loyal principles procured him the honour of knighthood from his Majesty King William, in 1694.

The mother of Mr Jenyns, was a daughter of Sir Peter Soame of Hayden, Baronet, in the county of Essex; a lady of great beauty, and endowed with an excellent understanding, which she had improved by reading. She was also well instructed in the principles of religion, which she manifested both in her life and conversation; and these excellences were heightened by graceful and polished manners. Under her tuition, his infant mind was carefully initiated in the elements of virtue and religion; and as soon as his years permitted him to enter on his classical studies, she surrendered her charge to a domestic tutor, the Rev. Mr Hill; who continued for some time to instruct him in the rudimental knowledge of the classics, and such other acquirements as were proper for his age; but more advantageous pursuits having induced him to relinquish his charge, he was succeeded by the Rev. Stephen White, whose brother gained no small distinction by his controversy with the Dissenters; and who became himself afterwards Rector of Holton in Suffolk. Under his superintendence, young Jenyns prosecuted his studies with great success; and though the solitude

of a domestic education be less favourable to the excitement of emulation and ambition, than public seminaries, yet he produced exercises in English, and also in the Latin and Greek languages, which were highly creditable to his diligence and understanding.

In 1722, he was sent to the University of Cambridge, and admitted as a fellow-commoner of St John's, under Dr Edmondson, at that time one of the principal tutors of the college. Here he spent three years, pursuing with great industry the course of studies in which young men of fortune usually engage. His behaviour was most laudable and orderly; and he found so much satisfaction in the regular discipline and employments of a college life, that he was often heard to say, he accounted the days he had resided there, among the happiest in his life. He left the University, however, without taking a degree, most probably in consequence of his marriage, which took place when he was very young.

The lady to whom he was united, was a cousin of his own, the natural daughter of his uncle, Colonel Soame of Deerham Grange in Norfolk. With her he received a considerable fortune, but in all other respects, the alliance, which was likely a mere union of interest, was unhappy. She appears to have been deficient in virtue and prudence,—qualities which are necessary to settle conjugal happiness upon a lasting foundation; and after some years, she eloped with a Leicestershire gentleman. A separation was soon agreed upon in form, and Mr Jenyns consented to allow her a maintenance, which was regularly paid her, till her death in 1753. The circumstance of his early

marriage, interrupted the plan of life he had formed after leaving the University. He entered upon no profession, but lived retiredly in London in winter, and in summer in the country, at Bottisham, employing himself principally in following out his literary pursuits, and cultivating his poetical talents.

Soon after his father's decease, which happened shortly before the general election in 1742, becoming master of a considerable estate, he gained the honour of being elected one of the representatives in Parliament, for the county of Cambridge, and continued to hold a seat in the House of Commons for nearly forty years, either for the county or borough of Cambridge; except when on the call of a new parliament, in 1754, he was returned for the borough of Dunwich in Suffolk, which he represented for four years; but upon Lord Dupplin being called to the Upper House, Mr Jenyns again succeeded him, as member for Cambridge. His elections, with one exception, were always unanimous; a circumstance very honourable to him, and the highest testimony that could be given, of the favourable opinion which his constituents entertained of his public conduct.

When Mr Jenyns first entered parliament, he found the House of Commons on the eve of dismissing from its confidence, Sir Robert Walpole, afterwards Earl of Orford, who had long held the reins of administration. With a high admiration of his talents and political measures, he willingly enlisted himself among his friends; and during the long sederunts of the first year of his parliamentary career, when the opposition party were using their utmost efforts to displace the falling minister, Mr Jenyns, unasked, and unknown to Sir Robert,

gave him his support as far as he could, without contributing his eloquence, for he seldom or never addressed the house on any subject. Though he was endued with an acute and comprehensive understanding, and possessed sufficient knowledge on all the leading questions that were discussed, yet not being bred to any profession, by which he had opportunities of cultivating his oratorical powers; and being naturally defective in that fluency and readiness, which are necessary to command the attention of an assembly like the House of Commons, he made no attempts to intrude himself upon its notice as a public speaker.

After Sir Robert's retirement from the administration, and after he was raised to the peerage, as a testimony of his sovereign's gratitude for his services, Mr Jenyns waited on him to congratulate him on the occasion, when Lord Orford gratefully acknowledged the support he had given him; at the same time declaring, "that had those to whom he had, during his meridian of power, shewn the greatest friendship, and loaded with all the favours he could confer on them, but borne as kind dispositions to him as he had done, he would not then have paid a visit to an ex-minister." After the dissolution of Walpole's administration, Mr Jenyns uniformly ranked himself among the friends of government; a compliance which has been reckoned hardly consistent with freedom of opinion, or the usual attachments of party. Without giving a public assent to every measure of every minister of the day, he contrived, not only to give him no offence, but to recommend himself to his favour; and in 1755, he was appointed by his majesty to a seat in the Board of Trade and Plan-

tations, which he continued to hold, through all changes, till the business of the Board was removed into another department; being transferred to the great officers of state, and those in the list of his Majesty's honourable Privy Council. At the time of its abolition, in 1780, besides Mr Jenyns, it consisted of the Earl of Carlisle, Lord Auckland, and Gibbon, the celebrated historian; and had for its secretary, Cumberland, the dramatic poet. Mr Jenyns constantly attended his duty at the Board of Trade, and acquired a thorough knowledge of the commercial interests of his country, which he was ever anxious to promote, as far as was consistent with sound policy.

Though he made no figure as a speaker in Parliament, he was a diligent and useful member; and there were few whose opinion was more valued, or whose knowledge of national affairs, and constitutional questions, was more extensive. His sentiments on various political topics of the day, may be found in his writings; where, however, they are not laid down with much precision. From his having observed the causes, and weighed the consequences of the opposition to Sir Robert Walpole, he had imbibed an early distaste to all systematic opposition; and nothing that occurred during his long seat in Parliament, ever tended to alter his mind on the subject. He had with great assiduity studied the British constitution; and few men understood it better, or held it in higher veneration; being firmly persuaded, that of all forms of civil government, it had the fewest imperfections of any to be found in ancient or modern times. This made him averse to all innovations and speculative projects in state affairs.

Our territorial acquisitions both in the East and the West, he always considered as enlarging the British empire beyond the bounds dictated by sound wisdom ; that they were too distant to be properly governed, and could not be defended on the ground of common justice or humanity. America and the East Indies he compared to two immense disproportionate wings, which he was apprehensive might, some time or other, fly away with the small body of the island to which they were attached. Being by temper inclined to mildness and moderation, he expressed his opinion, in the unhappy contests with our Transatlantic brethren, that the Colonists should be left to themselves ; and in a humorous piece of poetry, he declared his approbation of a scheme to that effect, by the Rev. Dr Tucker, Dean of Gloucester. His opinions, however, were, that this wantonness of liberty would work its own antidote, and that the Colonists, when tired of freedom, would voluntarily resume their dependence on the mother country.

During the recesses of Parliament, Mr Jenyns always retired to his estate in Cambridgeshire, where he officiated as a magistrate, and exercised charity and hospitality among his tenants and neighbours. From this practice he never suffered places of fashionable resort or public diversions to allure him, as he was persuaded his summers could not be better spent than among his own connections ; and that he could do more good at that time in his own parish, than in any other situation. He frequently lamented the prevailing fashion, which often carried gentlemen with their families to scenes of dissipation, remote from their houses and

properties in the country; the consequence of which was, that the money which should revert to the districts from whence it was received, was turned into a different channel,—tenants deprived of the advantages they were entitled to, from its expenditure among them,—the ties of reciprocal fellowship weakened, and the stream of charity stopped, which otherwise would have gladdened the hearts of their poor neighbours,—their inferiors deprived of their example, encouragement, and protection; whereby the manners of the country were altered for the worse, and many mischiefs necessarily occasioned to the public.

His character as a country gentleman, was not more laudable and exemplary than as a magistrate, in which capacity he constantly acted, and regularly attended all meetings for the purposes of public justice. In his official conduct he was strictly conscientious and upright, avoiding all contentions and quarrellings; and from the general opinion that was entertained of his inflexible integrity, and superior understanding, he was much resorted to. From his natural sagacity, quick discernment, and long experience, on hearing and examining parties, he seldom failed of obtaining a complete knowledge of the cases that came before him. His decisions, accordingly, were in general satisfactory to both sides, as he always gave his reasons for what he did, with a clearness and perspicuity accommodated to the understanding of all who heard him. Of the ability with which he discharged his duties as a civil officer, there needs no better proof than his own statement, that during the many years he had acted in the commission of the peace, and the many difficulties he had

met with, he had never been called to the Court of King's Bench, to account for his not understanding an Act of Parliament.

These numerous engagements, together with a variety of literary performances, of which we shall take occasion to speak immediately, engrossed the greater portion of Mr Jenyns' life, which was protracted beyond the ordinary span of human existence. After struggling for three years with the weakness and infirmities of old age, he was seized with a fever, of which he died in course of a few days' illness, on the 18th day of December, 1787, at his house in Tilney Street, Audley Square, London. He was interred in Bottisham Church, where, in the parish register, and contrary to the common forms, the Rev. Mr Mansell, afterwards Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Bishop of Bristol, inserted a very elegant compliment to his memory. Mr Jenyns had no family, but he left a widow; his second wife, whom he had married in February, 1754, and who was the daughter of Henry Grey, Esq. of Hackney, Middlesex. This lady, with whom he lived in the enjoyment of great conjugal happiness, survived him nearly ten years, having died at the age of ninety-four, July 25th, 1796.

Of Mr Jenyns' public character, the reader will be able to judge from the preceding sketches of his conduct as a country gentleman, and a member of Parliament. Although his versatility as a politician, and his adherence to legal power, in whatever hands it was lodged, have been thought inconsistent with manliness and independence of spirit, yet it would appear, his integrity was generally acknowledged and respected, since no party

offered to remove him, though it is evident his opinions, which he did not conceal, were not always in unison with theirs under whose banner he enlisted. In private life, he was equally averse to give offence. All his biographers agree, that he was a man of great mildness, gentleness, and sweetness of temper; which he manifested to all with whom he had any concern, either in the business or the social intercourse of life. He conducted his household with great regularity, and with such scrupulous punctuality, that he has sometimes been accused of being penurious. This charge, however, appears to have been entirely unfounded, as he was not only liberal and generous, but warm and active in his benevolence. He had great sympathy for the miseries of others; and no person saw, or more strictly practised the necessity imposed on those who form the superior ranks of life; whose duty it is to reconcile the lower classes to their present condition, by contributing their utmost to make them happy; for he was most kind and courteous to all his inferiors, not only in his expressions and his behaviour, but in assisting them in all their wants and distresses; ever considering his poor neighbours as parts of his family, and as such entitled to his care and protection.

As a companion, he is represented as highly engaging and delightful; for he possessed not only a well-informed mind, but had all the liveliness of a man of wit, joined to the greatest urbanity and politeness of manners. "He was a man," (says Mr Cole), "of lively fancy, and pleasant turn of wit, very sparkling in conversation, and full of merry conceits and agreeable drollery, which was heightened by his inarticulate manner of speaking

through his broken teeth; and all this mixed with the utmost humanity and good nature, as he was hardly ever severe upon any one, and by no means satirical in his mirth and good humour." These qualities made his acquaintance much courted by all who had a taste for brilliant conversation, as they were assured of being delighted wherever he was; and that though they did not possess the same talent, they never would be censured by him because they wanted it.

His person was delicate and diminutive, and his appearance the reverse of being prepossessing; yet his amiable and facetious habits made an ample amends for the injuries and defects of nature. Some curious traits of his person and character have been recorded by Cumberland, in the *Memoirs of his own Life*; which, though rather coarse, and with too much affectation of the ludicrous, give a very lively and picturesque description of his friend. "Soame Jenyns was the man who bore his part, in all societies, with the most even temper, and undisturbed hilarity, of all the good companions I ever knew. He came into your house at the very moment you had put upon your card: he dressed himself, to do your party honour, in all the colours of the jay; his lace indeed had long since lost its lustre; but his suit had faithfully retained its cut, since the days when gentlemen wore embroidered figured velvets, with short sleeves, boot-cuffs, and buckram skirts. As nature had cast him in the exact mould of an ill-made pair of stiff stays, he followed her so close in the fashion of his coat, that it was doubted if he did not wear them. As he had a protuberant wen, he wore a wig that did not cover above half his head. His

eyes protruded very much; and yet there was room between one of them and his nose, for another wen, that added nothing to his beauty: yet I heard once this good man very innocently remark, when Gibbon published his history, that he wondered how any body so ugly could write a book.

"Such was the exterior of the man who was the charm of the circle; and gave a zest to every company he came into. His pleasantry was of a sort peculiar to himself; it harmonized with every thing. Soame Jenyns told you no long stories, engrossed not much of your attention, and was not angry with those that did. His thoughts were original; and were apt to have a very whimsical affinity to the paradox in them. Ill nature and personality, with the single exception of his lines upon Johnson,* I never heard fall from his lips. Though his wit was harmless, the general cast of it was ironical; there was a terseness in his repartees, that had a play of words as well as of thought. He had a brevity of expression that never hung upon the ear; and you felt the point the very moment he made the push."

From this survey of his domestic and convivial character, we shall next consider him as an author, and a convert to the Christian religion. In the former capacity, he gained no small share of celebrity, although the popularity of his writings has not been lasting. In youth, being much of a beau,

* "Here lies Sam Johnson: Reader, have a care,
Tread lightly lest you wake a sleeping bear:
Religious, moral, generous, and humane
He was; but self-sufficient, proud and vain;
Fond of, and overbearing in dispute,
A Christian, and a scholar—but a brute."

and gallant in his attention to the ladies, his songs and early performances are tinged with a gay and sprightly humour; and bespeak a mind sufficiently at ease to trifle with the passions, but not always attentive to delicacy where it interfered with wit. The first, as well as the longest and best of his poems, was the "Art of Dancing," inscribed to Lady Fanny Fielding, afterwards Countess of Winchelsea. This was written when he was only twenty-six, and published without his name; but when discovered, it was considered as the prelude to greater performances. He continued for some time to cultivate his talents in this way, and produced short pieces on a variety of subjects; "An Essay on Virtue;" "The Modern Fine Gentleman, and Lady;" "The Squire and Parson;" "Imitations of Horace;" Epistles, Songs, and Translations. They are light, easy, and humorous, with considerable animation of fancy, and elegance of versification; but undistinguished by any qualities of superior poetical genius, although they procured him no little favour in his day, and have been received into some of the standard collections of English poetry.

As a writer of prose, few can be compared with him for purity and elegance, though his opinions and sentiments were often questionable, and did not escape the ordeal of severe criticism. He was first known to the world in this department of writing, by a "Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil," published in 1757,—a work which gained him the character of the most elegant writer of prose since the days of Addison. His main object in this Essay, was to give a satisfactory explanation of the difficulties which have

pressed upon every theory of the existence of evil, under the government of an infinitely wise and good Being. His fundamental principles are, that natural evils could not have been prevented without the loss of some superior good, or the permission of greater evil: And as to moral evil, that it is permitted in order to provide objects for the just infliction of those physical evils which were in their nature unavoidable. These ideas he pursues in a variety of acute remarks and ingenious illustrations; which, however, were thought to denote rather a warm imagination than a solid judgment.

But the charms of style could not protect his work from objections of a serious nature. Pamphlets were published, and private letters were addressed to him on the occasion, some of them containing much abuse and misapprehension. His most formidable antagonist was Dr Johnson, at that time editor of the Literary Magazine, who ably criticised this Essay, and with a bold hand swept away the theories which a lively fancy had formed. The subject which the Free Inquiry discusses, is one of great importance, and perplexed with difficulties which have long engaged the speculations both of philosophers and divines, but without receiving a very satisfactory solution, because they relate to questions which lie beyond the reach of human investigation, and cannot be determined, so long as mankind are permitted *to see but in part*.

In answering the question, Whence came evil? Mr Jenyns steers clear of the Manichean system, of two original principles, a good and a bad; and adopts that of Pope, considering evil, not in regard to the individuals who suffer by it, but as it affects the

whole system of the universe ; in which view he concludes, that evil is only an imperfection far overbalanced by a preponderance of good ; and that for the Deity to have endued created beings with perfection, that is, to have produced good exclusive of evil, is one of those impossibilities, which even infinite power cannot accomplish. On this part of his subject, he makes many elegant and acute observations ; which, however, are far from being sufficient to silence curiosity, or repress discontent. Whoever pushes his researches into these regions of metaphysical mysteries, must always abandon the inquiry at last in darkness and doubt. Many of Mr Jenyns' arguments are certainly better adapted to amuse than to convince ; some of them are fanciful, theoretical, and even ridiculous. In shewing the advantages of evil, and the good effects that human sufferings may produce, he entertains an opinion, that there is some inconceivable benefit in pain, abstractedly considered ; that pain, however inflicted, or wherever felt, communicates some good to the general system of being ; and that every animal is, some way or other, the better for the pain of every other animal. He even supposes a kind of sympathetic principle, like that of gravity or attraction, to run through all created existence ; and that the evils suffered on this globe, may by some subtle and inexplicable means, contribute to the felicity of the inhabitants of the remotest planets. And as we are allowed to hunt and destroy animals merely for diversion, he conceives it possible, that the same privilege may be indulged to beings above us, who may deceive, torment, or destroy us, for the ends only of their own pleasure or utility !

There is much fine writing, and a great many excellent passages in this Treatise, yet many of its hypothesis are extravagant and deserving of reprehension ; though, perhaps, the honest intentions of the author did not merit that bitterness and irony with which he has been chastised by the great colossus of criticism ; whose dissertation is written with too much asperity, though many have considered it as the first of his compositions, for strength of argument and brilliancy of wit. Mr Jenyns smarted severely under this castigation, and gave vent to his feelings in the angry epitaph on his critic ; which was an ill-timed resentment, and unworthy of his genius. The opposition that this book met with, however, did not alter his opinions : to a subsequent edition he prefixed an introduction, in which he endeavoured to reply to his opponents, but without retracting any thing he had formerly maintained ; and his reply is an able specimen of controversial writing, uniting the utmost candour with civility and good humour.

Mr Jenyns wrote likewise on political and other topics, which he embellished with his usual eloquence. He was one of the fashionable contributors to "The World," first published in 1753, to which he communicated five papers, all characterised by purity and vivacity of style ; and in one of which he expressed that opinion in favour of the doctrine of a pre-existent state, which he afterwards insisted upon more gravely, in his "Origin of Evil." In 1756, he wrote a pamphlet in favour of a national militia ; and one in 1767, entitled, "Thoughts on the Causes and Consequences of the high price of Provisions," which he imputed to the increase of the national debt ;

the wealth of private individuals ; and the poverty of the public. The newspapers were filled with answers and refutations, but the return of plenty soon made the controversy be forgotten. His other political pieces are, " Objections to the Taxation of our American Colonies ;" " A Scheme for the Coalition of Parties ;" and " Thoughts on the National Debt."

In 1782, appeared his " Disquisitions on Several Subjects." These are metaphysical, theological, and political ; in all of which he advances, amidst much valuable matter, a number of paradoxical theories, to which he seems to have been prompted merely by a love of novelty, or a desire to shew by what ingenuity opinions that contradict the general sense of mankind, may be defended. Among other answers to which this treatise gave rise, was an admirable piece of humour, entitled, " The Dean and the Squire," alluding to Dr Tucker, whose opinions on civil liberty approached those of our author. The Disquisitions are characterised by sprightly wit and acute penetration ; and may be regarded as an extraordinary production from a man in his 78th year. Their style is perhaps more elegant and animated, than that of any of his former writings ; and if mere elegance could atone for defect of argument, they might yet be read as models of chaste and correct English. The last of his performances was " Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform," written in 1784, when that subject was in agitation. In these he directs the whole force of his wit and argument against those innovations which, in his opinion, tended to anarchy and licentiousness ; but which were at war with the

principles he advocated at the commencement of his political career.

As a prose writer, there seems to be but one opinion with regard to Mr Jenyns; that he is entitled to a place among the purest and correctest authors in the English language. As a poet, he has had many equals, and many superiors; though he has point and brilliancy, he is deficient in that creative and lofty imagination, which marks the true genius of poetry. His prose compositions, whether serious or sprightly, are distinguished by remarkable accuracy and perspicuity; though they have now ceased to attract that peculiar interest which they did on their first appearance.

The performance which excited most attention on its publication, and which has survived the neglect and oblivion of his other works, was his "Treatise on the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion," published in 1776. The author tells us, that it contains those arguments which produced in his mind, a conviction of the truth of Christianity. He had, in the earlier and gayer part of his life, imbibed the principles of infidelity, of which he scrupled not to make an open profession. It is not very certain by what means the impressions of a religious education were eradicated; although there is every reason to believe that an engagement in pursuits inconsistent with Christianity, drove him to that expedient, as an excuse for his conduct, and a shield against the arrows of self-reproach; and this seems the more probable, from passages in his work, which is a narrative of his own experience. "If any one," says he, "be attached to a favourite pleasure, or eagerly engaged in worldly pursuits, incompatible with the

precepts of religion, he must either relinquish those pursuits with uneasiness, if he believe ; or should he be determined neither to repent nor reform, he must persist in them with remorse and dissatisfaction. Such, therefore, generally commence unbelievers in their own defence ; for the most insurmountable, as well as the most usual obstacle to our belief, arises from our passions, appetites, and interests."

By whatever cause his religious principles were perverted, the restless anxiety of his mind set him to think of giving Christianity a more minute consideration than he had yet bestowed upon it. He studied the Sacred volume with care, and probably called in to his aid some of those able controversial defences, which the infidelity of the eighteenth century had occasioned. The experiment he tried for solving this important question, proved successful ; and he has himself stated the argument which weighed most in overpowering his scruples and objections. "The well-attested miracles by which God hath borne witness to the veracity of his servants, and to the truth of doctrines delivered by them ; the completion of prophecies delivered many hundred years ago,—are no inconsiderable evidence on the side of revelation. But the internal evidence of the Christian religion, I must confess, carries with it an authority which has influenced my mind, more than all the external evidences. It was that which bore down my prejudices, and drove from my heart the infidelity, that for many years I had unhappily cherished."

The proofs which had thus convinced his mind of the divine origin of this religion, he was anxious, in justice to the cause he had neglected or injured,

to communicate, in as clear and concise a manner as he was able, thinking they might have the same effect upon others. From these honourable motives, he published his "View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion;" a work which got into a rapid and wide circulation, and was generally regarded as an ingenious defence of Christianity. The clergy welcomed this accession to their cause, in a layman of superior rank and acknowledged abilities; and by some of them, he was honoured with very flattering testimonies of their gratitude and approbation.

Mr Jenyns' method to prove the truth of the Christian religion, was by a process, in some respects the reverse of what had been often adopted. His opinion was, that we should begin, by shewing the internal marks of divinity which are stamped upon it; because on this, the credibility of the prophecies and miracles, in a great measure depends: for if we have once reason to be convinced that this religion is derived from a supernatural origin, prophecies and miracles will become so far from being incredible, that it will be highly probable that a supernatural revelation should be foretold, and enforced by supernatural means. Upon this plan he undertakes to demonstrate, that Christianity could not possibly be derived from human wisdom, or human imposture.

The following are the propositions upon which he builds his theory:—That from the New Testament may be extracted, a system of religion entirely new, both with regard to the object and the doctrines; not only infinitely superior to, but unlike every thing which had ever before entered into the mind of man:—that from the same book may

also be collected, a system of ethics, in which every moral precept, founded on reason, is carried to a higher degree of purity and perfection, than in any of the wisest philosophers of preceding ages :—And lastly, that such a system of religion and morality, could not possibly have been the work of any man, or set of men ; much less of those obscure and illiterate persons, who actually did discover and publish it to the world ; and that, therefore, it must undoubtedly have been effected by the interposition of divine power ; that is, that it must derive its origin from God.

In pursuing this argument, he shews that, as to the theology contained in the Scriptures, its superiority is too obvious to be contradicted ; and that, whatever we may think of the authority of these books, the relations which they contain, or the inspiration of their authors ; no man who has eyes to read, or ears to hear, can entertain a doubt, that they promulgated doctrines, not only unknown to all antiquity, but as inconceivable to the wisest of mankind antecedent to their appearance, as the Newtonian system is to the most ignorant savages in the wilds of America. With regard to the ethical part of Christianity, he observes, that it not only carries moral purity to a degree beyond that inculcated by any sect of philosophers, but that it wholly omits or disparages many virtues, on which they placed the highest esteem, such as valour, patriotism, and friendship : recommending others which, for usefulness and sublimity, will not bear a comparison ; unless any one should undertake to prove that humility, patience, forgiveness, and benevolence, are less amiable, and less beneficial qualities, than pride, turbulence, revenge, and

malignity ; or that a real immortality in the kingdom of heaven, is an object less exalted, less rational, and less worthy of pursuit, than an imaginary immortality in the applause of men. From these premises, which were incontrovertibly true, his conclusion followed,—that nothing but the supernatural interposition of divine wisdom and power, could have originated or established a religion, so far surpassing all preceding systems.

This defence, however, eloquent and perspicuous as it is, was by many thought to stand on questionable ground. The work was regarded as being of a suspicious tendency, and the author as, in many points, proving himself to be an insidious enemy to the cause he pretended to plead. Those who call themselves rational Christians, thought he yielded too much to the orthodox believer ; while the orthodox believer was shocked that he had conceded the possibility of certain miracles being forgeries. A controversy immediately took place, and continued for some time, in which several men of literary character distinguished themselves ; among whom were Dr Kenrick, Dr McLaine, the translator of Mosheim, the Rev. Mr Fleet, and a considerable number of anonymous writers ; some of whom treated both the work and the author with very unbecoming asperity. The discussion, however, proved highly advantageous to the book, which sold most extensively, while the controversy was kept alive. It even excited the attention of persons of rank ; and in that way was the means of doing much good.

The error with which he has been thought most justly chargeable, is his neglect of the external evidences ; and in his admitting the use of reason in

some instances, while he refuses it in others. The proofs arising from prophecies and miracles, he did not, however, depreciate, or reject as of no consideration ; on the contrary, he admitted them to have their proper weight, but he conceived they had already been enforced by much abler pens ; and that they did not carry the same degree of conviction, with arguments that might be deduced from the internal excellence of Christianity. Had he professed to have defended the outworks, we might have expected to find an equal display of eloquence and ingenuity ; but this he proposed not to do.

But whatever difference of opinion there may be as to the method of the performance, it would be unjust to question the author's sincerity, or disbelieve the very explicit avowal he has made of his convictions. That he was an insidious enemy, is a libel and a calumny, without the least foundation. The whole tenor of his subsequent life and conversation attested the integrity of his sentiments, and his firm belief in what he had written. " It was written," (says Mr Cole), " under a full conviction of the truth of the Christian dispensation, and a sincere zeal for its service. The author, struck with the beauties of its principles and doctrines, so essential to the happiness of human creatures, thought that a short and clear representation of their internal excellence, might allure the attention, and procure a belief in the truth of the Christian religion, from those who read but little, and think less ; and who formed too considerable a part of the bulk of mankind, not to attract the notice and care of him who felt himself interested in the happiness of the whole human race."

The author's own declaration is equally modest

and ingenuous, and deserves to be recorded with that of his biographer. "Should the few foregoing pages add but one mite to the treasures with which other learned writers have enriched the world; if they should be so fortunate as to persuade any of our minute philosophers to place some confidence in established opinions, and to distrust their own; if they should be able to convince them, that notwithstanding all unfavourable appearances, Christianity may not be altogether artifice and error; if they should prevail on them to examine it with some attention; or if that is too much trouble, not to reject it without any examination at all—the purpose of this little work will be fully answered."

It must have been gratifying to Mr Jenyns, that he lived long enough to perceive, that his little work had the effect which the benevolent author intended; which more than consoled him for the rudeness and severity with which he had been attacked. He received numbers of private letters, written with all the humility and pious gratitude which the primitive Christians expressed to their first instructors, from individuals who had perused his treatise; and who had in consequence been brought over from unbelief, to a full conviction of the truths he had endeavoured to establish. Among those who have felt and acknowledged its beneficial tendency, may be mentioned the Rev. Thomas Scott, author of a Commentary on the Bible. In consequence of hearing it recommended by a dignified clergyman, in a visitation sermon, he read it, and observes, "that the truth and importance of the gospel, appeared with convincing evidence to my understanding, and came with efficacy to my heart, by reading this little book."

Its influence was not confined to this country, but operated in distant parts of the world ; and Mr Cole mentions a letter from India, in which the writer, confessing his former infidelity, and the pains he had long in vain taken, by means of books recommended to him, written on the truth of the Christian religion, to give his assent to it, concludes in these words, “ I eagerly wished to believe, but could not satisfactorily. But now, I thank God, Soame Jenyns’ reasons have, I hope, triumphed over all my doubts ; and I have given an unfeigned and full assent to his three propositions, which, in my opinion, prove all that is wanted to be cleared up.” It has been translated into several foreign languages ; and notwithstanding the criticisms and severe strictures of some able writers, yet from its admirable style and moderate bulk, it has been much read, and many of its observations have been universally acknowledged to be equally just and impressive ; and what may be considered as adding to its intrinsic value, is its being the production of a very ingenious Deist, who having, as he says of himself, some leisure, and more curiosity, employed them both in resolving a question which seemed to be of some importance, Whether Christianity was really an imposture, founded on an absurd, incredible, and obsolete fable, as many suppose it ?—Or whether it is what it pretends to be, a revelation communicated to mankind, by the interposition of supernatural power ? And in course of his examination, he soon found that the first was an absolute impossibility ; and that its pretensions to the latter were founded on the most solid grounds.

DR. THOMAS BATEMAN.

MEDICAL men have been very generally reputed sceptical; and the mischief has been thought to originate in the natural tendency of some of their studies: For this conclusion, however, there seems no just foundation; since there are not wanting the most illustrious examples to prove, that this science has been adorned by practitioners of acknowledged piety, who have exemplified in their lives, those principles which have been deemed incompatible with deep inquiry into the subjects of their profession. Many who have devoted their time and their talents to a minute examination of the fabric and texture of the human body, have concluded, from the manifest appearances of benevolence and design, that it was the work of a Being transcendently wise and powerful.

These inferences struck even the anatomists of antiquity, who knew not the uses and functions of many parts, and were comparatively unacquainted with the curious architecture and economy of the whole system. Galen was converted by his own dissections; and could not but own a Supreme Being, from the proofs of wisdom and contrivance to be found in the mechanism of the human frame. Successive improvements in the art have added fresh confirmation to those sentiments, which a superficial acquaintance had drawn forth. The cele-

brated physicians Hartley, and Harvey who discovered the circulation of the blood, were led, by their researches, to entertain the same profound veneration for the great Creator, to whose immediate agency they ascribed the most wonderful of nature's operations. So far, therefore, as anatomical knowledge is concerned, the preliminary studies of medical men appear calculated rather to impress the mind with devotional feelings, and to act as an antidote against infidelity.

There are, besides, other reasons why this numerous and respectable body might be presumed to be favourably disposed towards religion. There is a striking analogy between the two sciences, the one administering relief to the spiritual wants of man, as the other does to his bodily infirmities. Considering how intimate a sympathy there exists between the affections of mind and matter, and what influence the situation of the former has in allaying or inflaming the diseases of the body, we might naturally suppose they would regard religion as a valuable ally; which, by calming the troubles and agitations of the soul, contributed so powerfully to assist the operations of their salutary art. Few individuals have a better opportunity of witnessing the beneficial effects of Christianity under the most trying occasions, and how much a steadfast belief in its doctrines, tends to support and console the exhausted sufferer; even when earthly remedies have lost their power, and all external means proved unavailing. It would seem, therefore, a strange want of moral feeling, or even of ordinary curiosity, to remain insensible to its importance, or hesitate to inquire into the grounds upon which its truth is established.

But it may seem more wonderful, that from these peculiar opportunities and advantages, inferences and principles should be drawn hostile to religion ; or that the same discoveries should be accused of leading to scepticism, which have convinced atheists and infidels by the evidence of a thousand demonstrations. There are, however, some among the medical faculty, on whom anatomy has had this effect ; and instead of inspiring religious sentiments, has either disinclined their thoughts to the subject, or confirmed them in infidelity. Among this number, was Dr Bateman, late physician to the Public Dispensary, and to the Fever Institution, in London ; a gentleman whose scientific attainments were of a high order, and whose moral conduct appears outwardly to have been unimpeachable.

THOMAS BATEMAN, M.D. was born at Whitby, in Yorkshire, on the 29th of April, 1778. He was an only son, and had the misfortune in early youth to be deprived of his father, a man of superior capacity, and of the medical profession, which he practised very extensively at Whitby. He was from infancy of a delicate constitution ; and gave then no indications of that diligence and ability which afterwards distinguished him. At four years of age, he was placed as a day scholar, under the care of the Rev. Mr Watson, a dissenting minister, and an intimate friend of his father. At six, he began to learn Latin, for which he must have possessed considerable talents, as he was always at the head of the boys of his own age. Though punctual in the performance of his tasks at school, he evinced no particular ambition in the pursuit of

knowledge, and never opened a book for his own amusement.

With Mr Watson he remained seven years ; and being then removed to spend the summer in the country, on account of his health, he became indolent, and lost all relish for books of any kind. It was his constant practice to sit on the top of a gate near the house, for great part of the day, lost in thought, without seeking either pleasure or employment ; a habit which led his father to predict that he would never be good for any thing. In winter he was again returned to school at Whitby, where the dormant energies of his mind were roused into activity ; and as he found his new instructor deficient in classical learning, he expressed an earnest wish to be sent where he might have better opportunities of improvement. Accordingly, he was removed to Thornton, a village about twenty miles distant from his native place.

Here, from the very first, he distinguished himself by an ardour quite unusual, and altogether different from his former habits ; and took the lead in every branch of learning. Instead of mingling in the active sports of his school-fellows, he made music, drawing, and botany, the relaxations of his leisure hours. He ranged the whole country in search of plants—an occupation which proved beneficial to his health ; and before he left school he had completed an extensive *Hortus Siccus*. Astronomy and electricity were also among his favourite pursuits ; and having a mechanical turn, he made a planetarium, and an electrical machine, merely from the descriptions of them in Chambers's Dictionary ; cutting all the wheels of the former with his pen-knife. His most remarkable fa-

culty as a school-boy, was his sound and penetrating judgment ; and he was not so much distinguished by quickness, as by the unceasing energy and vigour of his mind. Among his juvenile productions, were some poetical translations from the Greek and Latin, and a few humorous stanzas of his own, addressed to one of his companions, on his want of taste and ear for music. He was remarkably silent and reserve ; but amidst all his gravity, he had a quick sense of the ludicrous, which supplied him frequently with subjects for amusement, both in prose and verse ; and afforded him an agreeable relaxation in his severer studies.

At the age of fifteen, he lost his father ; and as his profession had already been determined by his own choice, he was brought home from Thornton, and sent to attend an apothecary's shop, in order to acquire a knowledge of pharmacy. At the same time, he obtained some acquaintance with the French language, mathematics, and mineralogy ; as useful preliminaries to his medical studies. At nineteen, he went to London, with a tolerable stock of knowledge, both classical and natural, as a foundation for his destined profession ; and what was of more importance, trained to habits of great application and research. The chief objects of his attention in London, were anatomy, and the practice of physic. For this purpose, he entered to the Lectures at Windmill Street ; and as Physician's pupil at St George's Hospital, for the winter of 1797-98, under Dr Baillie, a most distinguished teacher, and gifted with talents of the first order ; and what adds to his medical reputation, he made the science of which he was so eminent a master, a powerful declaration of his sentiments against

infidelity. No pupil could honour such a preceptor more cordially, or with juster discrimination, than Mr Bateman. He was alive to all his merits, and made the most of them by unremitted attention.

Next year he removed to Edinburgh, where his studies were continued with the same assiduity. During the Session of 1800-1, he was the Clinical clerk of Dr Duncan, senior, at the Infirmary; and made the best use of his advantages in that valuable institution. He was from the first a member of the Royal Medical Society, in which he took an active share, and had the honour of becoming one of its annual presidents. He was also a member of the Natural History Society, where he was remarked for the instructive tendency of his observations; and uniformly regarded, by all who knew him, with general estimation. In June, 1801, he took his degree, having chosen for the subject of his thesis, *Hæmorrhæa Petechialis*, which was treated with great ability, and entirely his own composition,—a circumstance highly creditable to his diligence and his scholarship; and which is the more deserving of notice, as medical theses are very seldom the genuine production of the reputed author, but forged in some private manufactory, where latinity, and other necessary furnishings, are sold to the aspiring graduate; by which ignorance is often enabled to deck itself in meretricious honours, and to purchase a reputation it has never earned.

Dr Bateman had now completed every part of his preparatory education; leaving a very favourable impression of his talents on the minds both of his professors and his fellow-students. From

every school he had attended, he carried away all the benefits they could communicate. He had wasted neither time nor money, health nor talents ; and was ready for his vocation, with all the accomplishments and advantages essential to his art. Immediately on quitting Edinburgh, he settled in London for practice ; and was admitted a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians, in 1805. He entered at the Public Dispensary, as a pupil under Dr Willan, where his assiduity soon led to his appointment as assistant physician ; and subsequently to his becoming a colleague in the same institution, in 1804. He was the same year elected Physician to the Fever Institution, or House of Recovery.

In these offices, which he held for many years, his ardour was unabated ; and he discharged, so long as his health enabled him, their numerous duties, without any assistance. In expending his time, he was very economical ; and as he still retained his studious habits, he soon became a contributor by his pen to the diffusion of medical knowledge. His Dispensary Reports, in the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal, first introduced him to the public as a writer. To the establishment of that Periodical, he had given very efficient support, having been for some time its joint editor. Another of his early communications to that Journal, was an account of the Fever Institution. Several other articles of his, scientific and critical, which he contributed from time to time, may be found by consulting the index of that work. He wrote also most of the medical articles, as well as most of the professional biographies, in Dr Rees's Cyclopaedia. He composed

with great fluency, yet with little necessity of revision or correction.

During all the years of his laborious studies, he never allowed himself to relax. He was indeed fond of society, and of its ordinary amusements; he was also an amateur in music; and an admirer of poetry and works of imagination. These he all enjoyed in their turn, with a peculiar relish and vivacity. Few were better qualified than he, to enjoy the pleasures which could be snatched from such books as administer to a pure and cultivated taste. He had grown up in the love of nature, and his early botanical pursuits had helped to confirm it into a habit. But his mind and heart were too full of their proper business, to be engrossed or captivated by any minor concerns; which were never allowed to encroach on his studies, farther than as means of recreation. In private practice, as well as in the public institutions, with which he was connected, his conduct was uniformly deserving of praise. Neither pleasure nor interest could ever withdraw him from the path of his duty; and this firmness of purpose being tempered by good sense, and a kindly disposition, it acquired for him a proportionate weight in the estimation of his professional brethren.

His advances, however, to the more profitable employments of his art were slow, as will generally be the case, where talent, even the best and most persevering, has to make its own unassisted way. In 1811, on Dr Willan's absence, he became the principal authority on all questions relating to affections of the skin. In this department, his practice was gradually productive of more emolument, whilst his general reputation

was becoming more and more extended by the confidence which the medical world reposed in his ability and integrity. The distinction he had gained as a writer, and a skilful practitioner in cutaneous diseases, was well confirmed by the appearance of his *Synopsis* in 1813,—a work which justly entitled him to an eminence no one had enjoyed before, in that particular department of practice. As fame travels fast, especially when it carries improvement in knowledge, the *Synopsis* was speedily translated into the French, German, and Italian languages; and among other pleasing instances of approbation with which the author was gratified, was one from a very high quarter. The Emperor of Russia condescended to request, by letter, that copies of Dr Bateman's books might be sent him by the hands of the Imperial Ambassador in London; and on the command being fulfilled, a ring of a hundred guineas' value was conveyed to the author, with an intimation, that any works he might write in future, should be transmitted in like manner to St Petersburg.

These incessant occupations wore down a frame originally delicate; and in 1815, his health began to give way. To derangement of the digestive functions, and successive attacks of periodic head-ach, was superadded a gradual failure of the sight of his right eye, supposed to be occasioned by his unremitting application to making coloured drawings of diseases of the skin; and as vision in the left eye was also to a certain degree affected, it was resolved to have recourse to mercury. But it soon became necessary to abandon this course, on account of the distressing train of symptoms which ensued, and of which he published himself

a very interesting sketch, in the 9th vol. of the *Medico-Chirurgical Transactions*. As he was incapable of undergoing fatigue, he could not hope to derive much benefit from exercise; yet could he have been prevailed on to retire a few miles into the country, and spend some time in entire rest from his labours, there is every probability his life might have been prolonged. But an epidemic fever had then (1817) begun in London, and his zeal was not to be restrained. He recommenced his attendance at the Fever Institution, and for nearly a year, he spent above two hours daily in the wards of that Hospital; having in course of that time, had the care of about 700 patients. Such was his anxiety to watch the progress of this epidemic, that nothing could induce him to remit his exertions, until all the officers and most of the attendants had suffered from the contagion.

His strength proving unequal to the labours of his office, he resigned his post of Physician to the Fever Institution, and was in consequence appointed consulting Physician. But though relieved from the more urgent of his public duties, and at leisure to devote more attention to his health, and more time to relaxation, he received little benefit from this change in his circumstances. In the summer of 1819, he left London, for Yorkshire, in the hope of deriving advantage from the mineral waters; when the increase of his distemper determined him to resign his appointment at the Public Dispensary, and to forego all thought of returning to practice in the metropolis. His health continued for some time variable; and he suffered much from a progressive affection of the digestive organs, accompanied with great exhaustion of

strength, and an irritability of nervous feeling, inconceivably painful and distressing.

It was at this time, and under these circumstances, that he first turned his mind to the subject of religion,—a subject which he had never examined with any care; partly from want of opportunity, and partly from a sceptical bias which he had contracted in course of his profession. This unhappy tendency manifested itself during the period of his anatomical and physiological studies at Edinburgh, which strongly inclined him to the doctrine of Materialism,—a system which maintains that the mental faculties are the result of corporeal organization,—that the soul of man is material, commencing and terminating with his mortal existence. These principles were afterwards confirmed, or at least increased by the society which he fell into, of some men of considerable talent, who had already espoused these pernicious doctrines.* Though never able decidedly to embrace these opinions himself, he was yet sufficiently influenced by them, to become sceptical respecting

* Besides Dr Bateman, there are instances of others in the medical profession, entangling themselves in the toils of philosophical scepticism; and afterwards making public recantation of their errors. Dr Oliver, an eminent physician at Bath; Dr Okely of Northampton, author of a book, called "Pyrology," in which he denied the moral government of God, and the immortality of the soul; Dr Vanderkemp, a Dutch physician, who, like Wilson, from an infidel became a zealous missionary; are all examples of reformed sceptics; and might, with propriety, have been annexed to the present Selection; but as they exhibit only different features of the same principle; it has been thought unnecessary to enter into any further details, or make repetitions, which might prove tiresome rather than agreeable or instructive.

the truth of divine revelation ; and lived, in consequence, a stranger to the hopes, as well as negligent of the duties of Christianity.

Amidst the zeal and industry with which he had continued his pursuits of science and literature, he had contrived to mix with his severer studies, so long as his health permitted, a large portion of the dissipations of gay society, of which the energy of his mind and feelings, rendered him uncommonly susceptible. He always retained a high sense of honour, and was strictly careful to avoid, in all his conduct, every thing that the world esteems discreditable ; but of the principles of morality as laid down in the gospel, he had yet no conception ; and this defectiveness in his moral views, led him to a total indifference and neglect of all religious duties. His good-breeding restrained him from making a display of his opinions ; and some of his most intimate friends never heard him express a single sceptical sentiment. He never spoke of sacred things, or serious characters, with levity ; and in whatever company he might hear them treated irreverently, his own tongue was not known to join in the licence. On the contrary, such language always evidently gave him offence, and hurt his feelings. Neither did he make unbelief a plea for immorality, or indecorum of any kind. But with all these specious, and even amiable qualities, he was obviously wrong in his religious belief, and had formed his life after a very meagre and unsound system of morality.

It was in April 1820, that he first spoke to an intimate acquaintance on the subject of religion. He was labouring under extreme languor, and had expressed his conviction that he could not live

much longer ; but added he, “ all these sufferings are a just punishment for my scepticism, and neglect of God and religion.” This led to a conversation, in course of which he blamed the tendency of his professional studies for misleading him ; although he concurred in the opinion of his friend, that the evil lay rather in his never having examined the evidences for the truth of the Bible, as an actual revelation from God ; and observed, that he had intended to inquire fully into the matter, when the complaint in his eyes came on, and shut him out from reading. Meantime, Scott’s “ Essays on some of the most Important Subjects in Religion,” were read to him ; and this appeared to produce a very surprising effect on his mind. He listened with intense earnestness, and when the first Essay was concluded, he exclaimed, “ this is demonstration ! complete demonstration !” He then wished to hear the account given by the Evangelists, of the resurrection of Christ, which was read to him ; besides many other passages of sacred writ ; with some of which he was particularly struck.

For several days, he shewed increasing interest on the subject of religion ; and had portions of Scripture, and other books, continually read to him ; which totally altered his views and sentiments. “ It is impossible to describe,” (said he), “ the change which has taken place in my mind ; I feel as if a new world was opened to me. All the interests and pursuits of this, have faded into nothing, in comparison with it. They seem so mean, and paltry, and insignificant, that my blindness in living so long immersed in them, and devoted to them, is quite inconceivable and astonish-

ing to myself." He often expressed, in the strongest terms, and with many tears, his deep repentance, and his abhorrence of himself for his former sinful life, and rebellion against God ; but he seemed, from the first, to have so clear a view of the all-sufficiency of the atonement, and of the Christian scheme of salvation, as freed him at once from that distrust which is so apt to afflict penitents, on a first conviction of their sins.

The only subject which created in him much uneasiness, and seemed to stagger his faith, was the miracles recorded in the New Testament. These doubts, however, it is obvious, were rather the effects of a momentary feeling, than of reasoning or reflection, and more properly temptations to unbelief, than unbelief itself ; and in this light he himself considered them. He felt much relief in the exercise of prayer, in which he sometimes spent whole nights, till at length his mistrust and apprehensions entirely subsided ; and left him satisfied on all those points which had presented so many obstacles to his mind. Having recovered his strength in course of the summer, he still manifested an equal regard for the subject that most deeply concerned him. The avidity with which he listened to the word of God,—his eagerness to attend public worship,—the change which had taken place in his tastes, inclinations, and pursuits, all testified that he was indeed "brought out of darkness into marvellous light." His leisure time was wholly devoted to religious reading ; for every other subject had now become insipid and uninteresting to him ; even the pursuits of science, which had engrossed so much of his attention, never afforded him such vivid enjoyment as he now received from these hallowed studies.

In contrasting, as he often did, his present happiness with all that he had formerly enjoyed, and called happiness, he seemed at a loss to find words to express how poor, and mean, and despicable, all earthly gratifications appeared to him, compared with that peace and joy in believing; which, as he sometimes said, ten thousand worlds would not tempt him to part with. In reflecting on his past life, the only thing that gave him any satisfaction, was the hope that his labours might have been beneficial to his fellow-creatures; for whom his charity had now become unbounded. The blessing of his conversion, he used to remark, was never out of his mind, day or night; that it was a theme of perpetual thanksgiving; and that he never awoke in the night without being overwhelmed with joy and gratitude at the recollection of it.

He bore his bodily afflictions with the most exemplary patience, and even cheerfulness; regarding them as instrumental in bringing him to God; and that his almost total blindness, by shutting out external objects, had left him to devote his mind more entirely to spiritual things. His faculties, naturally active and ardent, retained their powers in full vigour to the last moment of his life; and were never once clouded or debilitated, even in his most depressing nervous languors. Indeed, after the whole current of his tastes and affections had been turned into a new channel, their ardour and activity rather increased than diminished,—facts that might have served to refute his belief in materialism,—a system which teaches that mind and body grow up, decay, and perish together. During the last week of his existence especially, the

strength and clearness of his intellect, and of his spiritual perceptions, were very remarkable ; and on some one observing to him, that as his bodily powers decayed, those of his soul seemed to become more vigorous, he replied, " They do, exactly in an inverse ratio. I have been very sensible of it." He conversed with great animation, chiefly on the joys of heaven, and the glorious change he was soon to experience ; till within half-an-hour of his death, which took place on the 9th of April, 1821 ; exactly twelve months after his attention had first been awakened to the subject of religion.

The conversion of Dr Bateman, and the circumstances under which it was effected, gave rise to certain objections on the part of some of his friends, as to the propriety of detailing his scepticism, and the process by which his mind was brought over to a settled and lively faith. There appears, however, not to be the slightest ground to call in question either the manner, or the reality of his change. That his mind became more susceptible of the impressions of religion, through the influence of sufferings and bodily afflictions, is a fact that need not be concealed ; and so far from being any objection, is on the contrary a direct confirmation of many of the declarations of Scripture, as well as of common experience ; that distresses and disappointments are often necessary to open mens' eyes to the delusions of the world ; and to compel them to look for higher sources of gratification, than in the pursuit or enjoyment of terrestrial things ; and surely it can bring no discredit on the gospel, that it affords its believers peace and consolation, when all other resources have failed them.

What influence the morbid state of his nervous sensations may have had on his moral or religious feelings, it would perhaps be difficult to ascertain. They were at times, extremely harassing; and overwhelmed his mind occasionally with groundless apprehensions. But though this was the case when he received his first impressions of divine truth, he did not always continue under these depressing and gloomy influences. For the last year of his life, he devoted all the powers of his vigorous intellect and discriminating judgment, to the investigation of religion; examining it with the same caution and minuteness, as he would have done any other science; and with an ardour increased, not so much by the novelty of the pursuit, as by the conviction which struck him, more and more forcibly at every step, as light and knowledge increased, of the paramount value and infinite importance of the subject. That the natural faculties of his mind were not, in the least, weakened or impaired, was apparent to all who conversed or corresponded with him; and with regard to his profession, he never practised it with more acuteness and zeal, than during the last winter of his existence.

The genuineness and sincerity of his conversion, he himself evinced, by realizing the Scriptural signs of grace and regeneration. Had the effects of debility and disease produced no other change, but in the state of his feelings, the alteration would have been very unimportant; and, most likely, had proved as variable and transitory, as the capricious sensibilities which gave it birth. But the change that took place in his conduct and dispositions, was quite as obvious as that which affected his feelings and views. Vices which before

he had tolerated, he now abhorred,—religious duties which he had entirely neglected, were punctually attended to,—and the society of his unbelieving companions, exchanged for those of an opposite character. The natural simplicity and integrity, for which he was so remarkable, remained unaltered in the great revolution that took place in his principles and habits. He went into no exaggeration of feeling, or excesses of enthusiasm. The sobriety of his temperament, and the soundness of his understanding, are quite enough to silence any suspicions that would attribute the sacred influence of religion on his mind, to the errors of an intellect impaired by disease and suffering; or to those flights of spiritual ecstasy, which are sometimes indulged, without any just conception of their nature and origin.

He expressed, indeed, in the strongest language, the superiority of the pleasures he drew from devotion, to such as arise from worldly gratifications; and in this it will be allowed, he was competent to judge, as he had experienced both, and could therefore appreciate their value, and decide upon their reality. And it should be remembered, that this was not the evidence of a man disappointed in his worldly pursuits; he had been crowned with success in the path he had chosen, and had earned a reward sufficiently flattering to literary ambition,—he had been keenly susceptible of intellectual delights; and of these, as well as of all inferior amusements, he enjoyed more than a common portion. But when the only object that can satisfy the affections, and fill the capacities of a rational being, were revealed to him; when life and immortality were brought to light, earthly

fame, and honour, and pleasure, dwindled into nothing.

It was not the fault of his judgment, that he so long remained in ignorance of those important truths, which at last brought such effectual conviction to his mind ; for he had long seen the necessity of inquiring into their evidences, and was determined, at some time or other, to enter upon it ; had he not been prevented by the loss of his sight. The cause was to be found rather in the perversion of his affections, which were entirely devoted to other objects ; and it requires but slight observation to be convinced how little, in general, the judgment influences the conduct, if it be powerfully opposed by inclination. In most cases of scepticism, the heart and will require to be first set right ; if this is done, the understanding will follow ; and difficulties that appeared insurmountable, will vanish without explanation, though they still remain as unanswerable as before. This was remarkably the case with Dr Bateman. Those philosophical objections to which he had previously been accustomed to recur, appear never to have disquieted his thoughts after his conversion, although they had received no satisfactory solution, and perhaps never will.

This speedy and effectual triumph over all his doubts, forms a peculiar feature in his history. But the dispensations of mercy are as various as the different characters of men ; and these are always adjusted and proportioned to each other, with infinite wisdom and tenderness. Where the time is limited, its operations are the more quick and powerful ; for as in the natural world, God in his providence has ordered, that where the summer is

short, there vegetation shall be rapid ; so in the kingdom of grace, the Sun of Righteousness, having but a little while to shine, the seeds shoot rapidly, and the fruits ripen fast. Few who consider the whole circumstances of the case, will be disposed to ascribe the remarkable change that took place in the mind of this eminent physician, to imbecility or enthusiasm. In the most rational and most satisfactory sense, his conversion was complete. His belief was not a philosophical persuasion that there may be a life to come ; it was a firm and solemn possession of his whole heart and soul, with the truths and promises of the gospel.

In point of incident, Dr Bateman's life is not eventful. It was spent in the constant routine and study of a useful profession. By his medical friends, and his acquaintance in general, he was uniformly held in high regard. It was not the admiration of talent alone, that sustained so permanent and so strong a feeling. They knew likewise, and valued the sincere and steady sentiments of attachment, by which he was himself actuated. In the ordinary intercourse of society, his varied attainments, and simplicity of manner, rendered him an acceptable companion ; although the extreme reserve of his character, gave an air of coldness and indifference to his deportment, very foreign to the true state of his feelings. His whole demeanour was plain, and without pretensions ; and his unimpeachable integrity formed a solid ground for that confidence, on which alone intimate and stable friendships can satisfactorily rest. The estimation in which his services were held at the benevolent institutions to which they were dedicated, was testified by repeated votes of thanks ;

the compliments of which he well merited. The testimonies of respect from the friends and companions of his studies, were warm and earnest ; and since his death, the language of affectionate recollection in which his name has been mentioned, is highly honourable to his professional character.

As a writer, he was remarkable for the clearness and unaffected style of his compositions ; and for the power which he possessed of discriminating truth, amidst the perplexities of conflicting opinions. The works which he published in a distinct form, were, " A Practical Synopsis of Cutaneous Diseases ;" " Delineation of the Cutaneous Diseases, comprised in the Classification of Dr Willan ;" " Reports on the Diseases of London, &c. from 1804 to 1816 ;" and " A Succinct Account of the Contagious Fever of this Country." The value of these publications has been fully proved, by the reception given them by the medical world. They are monuments of the unwearied assiduity with which the author pursued his studies ; and they are distinguished not only by acute and extensive observation, but by a spirit of active and enlarged benevolence. Though interrupted in the middle of his career, and prematurely removed from his sphere of usefulness, Dr Bateman had done much for the durable benefit of his profession, and earned for himself the universal reputation of a sound scholar, and an accomplished physician ; and what is not less creditable to his memory, of a firm believer in the truth of religion.

BARON HALLER.

HALLER is one of those distinguished literary characters, who have been not more illustrious in the republic of letters, than venerable as the advocates and the ornaments of religion and virtue. The number and variety of his labours, have rendered his fame universal ; and such was the versatility of his genius, and the indefatigable activity of his habits, that he has gathered laurels of unfading renown in almost every region of natural and moral science. Botany, anatomy, physiology, metaphysics, mathematics, history ancient and modern, poetry, politics, ethics, and theology, were all embraced within the comprehensive range of his studies, and received valuable contributions from his pen. His vast erudition, and his unbounded industry, could only be equalled by his unaffected piety, and his singular modesty.

His example is a most striking corroboration of Lord Bacon's assertion, that while a little philosophy inclines the mind to Atheism, a great deal brings it back to religion. In early life, " he had his doubts," as he himself expresses it ; and was unsatisfied with some of the doctrines and evidences of the Christian revelation ; but these scruples were dispelled by a more profound insight into the works of nature, on the one hand, and an impartial examination of the Sacred Oracles

on the other. Like Newton and Boyle, in proportion as he explored with success the mysteries and wonders of creation, he felt his breast warmed with devotion to its great Author and Governor. In an age when so many illustrious men prostituted their talents and their fame, in making unprovoked attacks on religion, he stands a splendid and honourable exception; and furnishes a most memorable instance of learning and philosophy, lending their combined assistance to the cause of revelation, instead of being misemployed in supporting sceptical tenets by artful and pernicious sophistries. In the structure and fabric of the material universe, he never failed to trace the visible footsteps of its divine Architect,—to discover more convincing tokens of his existence, and brighter apprehensions of his attributes. The world was both his library and his oratory,—a volume which he found every where replete with the lessons of piety and wisdom. Scarcely an object could present itself to his inquisitive eye, from which he did not draw useful and innocent instruction, or strike some spark of celestial fire to kindle and cherish his devotion. How applicable to him is the language of the great father of inductive philosophy, in one of his addresses to the Deity: “Thy creatures have been my books, but thy Scriptures much more. I have sought thee in the courts, fields, and gardens; but I have found thee in thy temples.” These impressions and sentiments in favour of revealed religion, he used every endeavour to communicate and impart to others, not only in his works, but by his example; for his general character was not more an ornament to science, than to human nature; and may be consi-

dered as able a defence of Christianity, as his writings.

ALBERT VON HALLER, was born at Berne, in Switzerland, on the 16th of October, 1708. His father, a native of that place, followed the profession of an advocate, or barrister ; in which he rose to very considerable eminence in his native city ; and in 1713, was appointed Chancellor of the Canton of Baden. Albert was the youngest of five brothers. He was a prodigy of early genius ; and displayed a prematurity of talents and application, as extraordinary as any upon record. When he had scarcely attained his fifth year, he repeated passages of Scripture ; and was accustomed to write in alphabetical order, all the new words which he recollected to have heard in course of the day. His progress in the languages was so rapid, that in his tenth year, he could translate with facility from Latin and Greek ; and compiled for his own use a Chaldaic Grammar, and a Greek and Hebrew Lexicon. Such was his capacity and his ardent passion for general literature, even at this juvenile period, that he is said to have abridged, from Bayle and Moreri, an historical dictionary, comprising above two thousand lives.

At the same age, he composed Latin verses, the excellence of which astonished his teachers. The most remarkable of these was a satirical poem, in Latin, in which he ridiculed his preceptor, Abraham Baillodz, a person of considerable learning, but of a capricious and morose disposition ; and so harsh and rigorous in his discipline, that the sight of him ever after excited in Haller the most painful recollections. His early inclination for poetry

and the Belles Lettres, particularly displeased his father, as apt to draw him away from the severer study of the law, to which he had destined him; but no remonstrance or admonition could confine his pursuits to one object, or check his insatiable desire for general information.

In 1721, his father died; a loss which left him in a great measure destitute of the resources of fortune. He was then removed from private tuition, to the public school at Berne, and placed in a class far beyond his age. There he exhibited many specimens of uncommon abilities. He usually wrote in Greek the exercise which he was required to compose in Latin; and his translations were sometimes so excellent, as to attract the surprise of the professors. In 1723, he was placed under the care of Dr Newhams, a celebrated physician at Bienne, whose son was one of his school companions. By him he was instructed in the elements of philosophy; and here he first imbibed a taste for medicine. But his new preceptor being a disciple of the Cartesian school, Haller soon rejected with disdain those doctrines, which tended to fetter his genius, rather than extend his knowledge; and continued to cultivate history, poetry, and polite literature; but with as little order and method, as might be expected from his years and habits.

He compared himself, at this period of his life, to a wild plant, which is left to grow without pruning; yet this very circumstance was probably the principal cause of his future proficiency, and the foundation of that universal knowledge which he afterwards acquired. It was here he began the custom, which he never omitted, of writing his opinion of the books he perused; and making large extracts

from them. The romantic scenery, and natural beauties of the place, awakened or rather inflamed his poetical enthusiasm, and produced a variety of pieces chiefly in German verse. Though but in his sixteenth year, he had written tragedies, comedies, and even an epic poem of four thousand lines, in imitation of Virgil. The Muse was his favourite study, and so entirely was he absorbed in it, that the house in which he lived having caught fire, he rushed into his apartment, and rescued his poetry; leaving his other papers, with little regret, to the flames. Yet in a short time after, when his taste was more matured, those verses which he had saved at the hazard of his life, and admired as the finest productions of human genius, were by his own hand consigned to the same devouring element, as unworthy of his pen, and written in too satirical a strain. From this fate, such only were exempted as he thought might attest his poetical talents, without reproaching the goodness of his heart; and some of his pieces at this time, which were afterwards published in the German language, were read and admired by the whole empire.

Having abandoned the law, as a profession which would have circumscribed the freedom of his inquiries, and which depended entirely upon precedent and authority, he resolved to devote himself to physic; the study of which comprehends such a variety of literary pursuits, and seemed to afford wider scope to the zeal and activity of his capacious mind. With this determination, he removed to the University of Tubingen, towards the end of 1723. His studies, which had hitherto been desultory and unfixed, he now pursued on a more regular and methodical plan, and with his

usual ardour, under the professors Camerarius and Duvernoy. The former instructed him in those sound principles of rational philosophy, whose characteristic tenet is first to doubt, and then to believe; and which are equally remote from credulity and scepticism. From the prelections of Duvernoy, he first contracted a taste for botany; and acquired the rudiments of that science, the boundaries of which he afterwards so greatly enlarged. Under the same master, he studied anatomy, in which his progress was so rapid, as to draw from his teacher, predictions of his future pre-eminence. It may be remarked, as a curious instance how far zeal for knowledge will surmount obstacles and impediments in its way, that notwithstanding his strong and invariable attachment to these sciences, he represents himself as prosecuting them, as it were, contrary to nature,—anatomy, although he could not endure cadaverous smells; and botany, though he was extremely short-sighted.

During his residence at Tübingen, he exhibited a proof of his knowledge in mineralogy, by refuting the error of Turnefort, in ascribing to fossils a vegetative power. Another display of his talents, and the first of his public exhibitions, was the refutation of a claim advanced by Coschwitz, a physician at Berlin, to the discovery of two salivary ducts, which Haller showed to be two veins. The natural anxiety of mind which this appearance in public created, having awaked him early in the morning, he walked out of the town, and was so charmed with the sweetness of the air, and the beauties of the country, that he composed on the spot, his *Ode to the Morning*. Here also he gave an example of control over the passions,

which may be considered as rare and difficult in a young man of vigorous health, and lively imagination. His social disposition, and the enticement of his companions, having in some convivial party betrayed him into an act of intemperance; this solitary deviation into excess so strongly impressed his mind, equally enamoured of virtue, and susceptible of ingenuous shame, that he instantly formed a resolution to abstain from wine in future, and adopted a strictness of morals, from which he never departed.

In 1725, Haller repaired to Leyden, attracted by the great celebrity of the illustrious Boerhaave. Here he found a more ample field for the improvement of his mind, and the display of his abilities. He soon arrested the attention, and became the favourite scholar of Boerhaave; whose example and encouragement fostered his growing predilection for botany; while the academic garden, then one of the richest in Europe, supplied abundant materials to gratify his passion. He noted down his master's Lectures on the Institutes of Medicine, which afterwards furnished materials for one of his most useful publications. The impression of this distinguished professor never left his memory. In one of his Letters to his daughter, written in his old age, he adverts with feeling to the subject. " Fifty years have almost elapsed since I was the disciple of the immortal Boerhaave; but his image is continually present to my mind. I have always before my eyes the venerable simplicity of that great man, who possessed, in an eminent degree, the talent of persuading. How many times hath he said, when speaking of the precepts of our Saviour, ' That this Divine Teacher knew

mankind better than Socrates.'” Besides this great man, Haller profited by the instructions of other able masters. He prosecuted his anatomical studies under Albinus, then rising into fame; and the venerable Ruysch, who had carried to great perfection the art of injecting anatomical preparations; and whose superb museum at Amsterdam, Haller often visited with enthusiasm. The precarious state of his health, at this time, induced him to accompany two of his countrymen, on a tour through part of Germany. But he soon returned, and took his degree of Doctor of Medicine, though then only in his nineteenth year. The subject of his thesis was on the Salivary Duct of Coschwitz which he published on the occasion.

In 1727, he visited England, where he was favourably received by Cheselden, Douglas, and Sir Hans Sloane; and under the auspices of these eminent men, he improved his knowledge of medicine and surgery. His stay was short, but he formed a permanent friendship with several distinguished characters. His insatiable ardour, next carried him to Paris. Here he studied botany under Geoffroy and Jussieu; and anatomy under Le Dran and Winslow: the latter of whom was his favourite master; as he was shackled by no system, but described simply and faithfully what he himself observed in his dissections. Paris afforded him an ample field for prosecuting his surgical operations, and he would gladly have protracted his visit; but, unluckily, one of his neighbours whom his private dissections had incommoded, denounced him to the minister of police; in consequence of which, he was obliged to remain for some time in concealment.

His intention was next to travel to Italy, where medical knowledge first revived after the barbarism of the dark ages. There he thought he might indulge his enthusiasm, and improve his taste in classical literature; but the passion of home, the national malady of the Swiss, prevailed over his inclination, and induced him to return to his native city. In his way to Berne, he stopped at Basle, for the purpose of studying mathematics and algebra, under the famous Bernoulli; and in these, as in every other literary pursuit, he applied with such unwearied perseverance, as if they were to form the sole object of his future researches. Of his proficiency in these studies he gave proofs which astonished his master; but he did not neglect or discontinue his professional avocations. He assisted professor Mieg in his anatomical demonstrations; and for a short time filled his chair with great credit, when he was disabled by a temporary illness. He likewise attended the Lectures of Tzinger on the practice of medicine; thus displaying at once, and with equal propriety, the dignity of a teacher and the humility of a pupil.

After an absence of nearly six years, spent in the indefatigable search of learning, Haller returned to Berne; expecting from his countrymen the same respect and patronage he had so liberally received abroad. But in this hope he was disappointed. His vast acquisitions excited the envy rather than the admiration of his fellow-citizens; and he had the mortification to experience that neglect, which is too frequently the only reward of genius in its native land. He intended to practise medicine; but those who were already established, industriously defamed his character, by re-

presenting him as attached to delusive theories ; and had even the address to prevent his obtaining the appointment of physician to an hospital, for which he was a candidate. During the summer of 1729, he made an excursion to the mountains of Switzerland, with the view of collecting plants ; and this journey, which he repeated annually, is rendered memorable by its suggesting to him the idea of his *Flora Helvetica*.

But it was not merely as a botanist, that he surveyed these interesting regions. The grandeur of their scenery awakened all his poetical enthusiasm ; and inspired his beautiful poem on the Alps, written in his twenty-first year—a production as sublime and immortal as the mountains which are the subject of his song. A variety of pieces followed this performance ; he wrote his *Ethic Epistles* ;—“ On the Imperfection of Human Virtue ;” “ On Superstition and Infidelity ;” “ On the Origin of Evil ;” “ On the Vanity of Honour ;” &c. These efforts of his early genius, evince a singular versatility of talent, and have gained him a place among the most distinguished votaries of the German muse ; although he never considered poetry otherwise than as an amusement, either to relax his mind, or to console him for the neglect and distractions of his contemporaries. A collection of his poems appeared in 1732.

Three years he continued at Berne, without having interest to procure any public employment. The satirical verses in which he occasionally gave vent to his indignation, served rather to diminish than increase the number of his friends. He solicited a medical professorship, and was repulsed ; but at length the fame of his abilities induced the

Government to establish a Theatre of Anatomy, in which he gave public lectures gratis. The disappointments he met with, made a strong impression on his mind; but instead of sinking him in despondence, they added new springs to his activity, and redoubled his application.

It was from the mountains of the North, that the first dews were shed on the opening buds of Haller's celebrity; for the earliest tribute to his literary talents was paid by the Royal Society of Upsal, who in 1735, elected him a member. This measure, which reflects so much credit on that body of learned foreigners, seemed to pave the way to more honourable and lucrative employments. The same year, his own countrymen acknowledged their sense of his great merit, by appointing him one of the Directors of the Hospital, and Keeper of the public library. In the former office, he distinguished himself by his zeal and humanity; and in the latter, he bestowed great pains in arranging the books, and forming the first catalogue. For this charge, he was well qualified, from his extensive acquaintance with biography and civil history; and it proved agreeable, by affording opportunities of enriching his comprehensive mind, which grasped at every branch of literature, though not immediately connected with his profession, that promised either to enlarge the sphere of his own knowledge, or to extend the boundaries of general science: Finding in the library a collection of more than five thousand ancient medals, which had hitherto been neglected, he took considerable pleasure in classing, and reducing them to order. His love of history induced him to pay great attention to the study of medals, which he justly considered

as the most authentic documents of historical truth, and the most certain monuments to ascertain the fluctuations and progress of language.

His fame as a scholar, now began to be more widely diffused. Various articles of his, in botany, anatomy, and medicine, which were written in Latin, were inserted in the *Journal of Nuremberg*. As a practitioner, he met but with indifferent success; and it is said, he never had a particular relish for this branch of his profession, as affecting his sensibilities too much, which were extremely tender. Every year continued to extend his celebrity; and in 1736, he received, unsolicited, an offer of the professorships of physic, botany, and surgery, in the University then newly established by George II. at Gottingen. Notwithstanding this offer was accompanied with peculiar advantages, and very flattering marks of royal approbation, it was not accepted of without hesitation and reluctance. His affections had become more firmly rooted in his native place, where his increasing merits had procured him many sincere friends; and the air of which he considered as in some respects necessary for the preservation of his health: Besides, he had other and more endearing ties in a young lady, of great beauty and accomplishments, Marianne Wyss, whom he had espoused in 1731, and who had brought him a family of three children. Her amiable qualities were greatly enhanced, by devoting her time and her talents in the most affectionate subservience to his manner of life. On the other hand, as a counterpoise to these domestic attachments, when he reflected on the honour of being invited by so great a monarch,—the dignity of the establishment to which he was called,—and the

circumstance of his having a more ample theatre for the improvement of his knowledge; these considerations induced him to remove to Gottingen.

He quitted Berne with much regret, which seemed a presage of the heavier calamity that overtook him, on his arrival at his new destination, —in the loss of his wife. The carriage in which they travelled, having broken down in the streets of Gottingen, which were unpaved, as the city had then fallen from its ancient grandeur into a state of decay; his beloved Marianne received a mortal injury, and died on reaching the end of her journey. He consecrated her memory by a beautiful and pathetic elegy; but her loss afflicted him so deeply, that it almost brought him to his grave. Study alone could dissipate his melancholy. He applied himself with redoubled ardour, and found in it the most effectual means to subdue his sorrows; while the duties of his office, by forcing him into public life, gradually drew him off from the contemplation of his own grief.

For seventeen years he discharged the important functions of his professorships, in a manner which reflected equal honour on himself, and on the academy to which he belonged. His long career was marked throughout by a series of researches, discoveries, and writings, worthy of the highest esteem. Here he had an ample field for the exertion of his gigantic talents; and the powers of his intellect seemed to expand in proportion to his enlarged experience, and his opportunities of improvement. Extensively acquainted with the sentiments of others, respecting the economy of the human body; struck with the diversity of opinions which they held; and sensible that the only means

of investigating truth, was by careful and candid examination ; he undertook the arduous task of exploring the phenomena of human nature, from the original source. In these pursuits, he was no less industrious than successful ; and there was hardly any function of the body, on which his experiments did not reflect a new or a stronger light.

In these researches he did not labour alone. The example of their preceptor inspired his pupils with the like spirit of experimental discovery ; Huber, Zinn, Zimmerman, Caldani, and many others, zealously co-operated in the same pursuits ; and their mutual exertions not only tended to advance the progress of medical science, but placed the philosophy of the human body on a more sure, and almost entirely new basis. It was his practice to encourage the most industrious of his students, to take some single object of the animal economy for their illustration, and devote themselves entirely to it. In these experiments he frequently gave his assistance, having constantly in view that great reform in physiology, which at length his writings effected. His active influence was employed in facilitating and enriching knowledge in all its departments. He obtained from Government the institution of a botanical garden, which he superintended : of an anatomical theatre ; an academy for drawing ; a school for midwifery ; and a college for the improvement of surgery. He formed the plan of the Royal Society of Sciences, of which he was appointed perpetual president ; and edited a Literary Review, to which he contributed above 1500 articles, in history, medicine, &c.

Gottingen has the honour of being the principal theatre of Haller's professional labours, as well as

of his literary fame. It was here that many of his scientific publications were compiled, and given to the world; and one can scarcely conceive the rapidity with which, in the midst of so many avocations, and the triple duties of his office, he contrived to compose such a number of works; and in so many different departments. Botany was a subject to which he devoted great attention; and had not the field been pre-occupied by the celebrated Linnæus, he would have stood foremost among his contemporaries, as an improver of the science. It was at Basle, as he has informed us, that his herborizing enthusiasm was first awakened. Inspired, as he says, by the genius of that place, which had nurtured the Bauhins; and where, at that period, this branch of Natural History was successfully cultivated by Staehlin, he laid the original design of his future Flora. The annual journeys that he made into various parts of Switzerland, and especially among the Alps, greatly increased his acquisitions. He cultivated a correspondence with the most eminent botanists, particularly with Scheutzer, Ludwig, Linnæus, Van Royen, and Dr John Gesner of Zurich, who had meditated a design to publish a Swiss Flora, and generously communicated to his friend, the materials which he had collected. For Linnæus he had a high esteem, but it was rather that of talent than of friendship. He never would adopt the sexual or artificial system of the Swedish naturalist, but followed his own arrangement, which he founded on the natural resemblances and affinities of plants.

At Gottingen, Haller continued his botanical pursuits with undiminished ardour. For this purpose, he took a journey, in the summer of 1738,

into the ancient Hercynian Forest; and in the following year, he repeated his Swiss tour; of both which he published accounts. In 1742, his great botanical work, on the Plants of Switzerland, the result of fourteen years' study, made its appearance, in two volumes folio, written in Latin, and embellished with numerous elegant engravings. It was the most copious Flora ever published, comprising 1840 species; and at once raised him to the first class among the proficients in that science. He gives a chronological account of 268 volumes cited in the work; each accompanied by a general character, in which he points out the merit or demerit of the author. These remarks are extremely useful and entertaining, forming almost a history of the science down to his own time. He then delineates his own system of botany, according to which the plants are disposed.

Throughout this great work, Haller is entirely original; not satisfying himself with giving the descriptions of former writers, he appears every where to have copied from his own observations. It was his custom, as he acquaints us, to write down the natural character of each plant, on the day he discovered it. Each species is illustrated with a number of synonymes, extracted from former authors, and arranged as much as possible in chronological order,—a method highly useful, as exhibiting at one view, a brief history of the plant; by pointing out the first discoverer, and the regions of its growth. To each plant also is subjoined a short account of its qualities and uses, both economical and medicinal. This work was often republished, in course of which it received various successive corrections and augmentations; and in

1768, it was given in its perfect form, under the title of "*Historia Stirpium Helvetiæ Indigenarum.*" Haller's other botanical works were, a catalogue of the plants growing in the Physic Gardens at Gottingen, which he had himself been the instrument of establishing in 1741. This little volume was afterwards enlarged, so as to comprehend the plants spontaneously growing in the environs, especially those of the Black Forest. It was the production of three months vacation; and had not the importance of his other engagements prevented him, he intended to have described the plants of Germany at large. In 1745, he gave a new edition of the "*Flora Jenensis,*" of Rupprius; to which he prefixed anecdotes of the author, enlarging and improving the whole from his own discoveries.

Haller's botanical labours, did not terminate with these performances. On his return to Switzerland, many years after, he still continued his researches; and also sent, at his own expense, persons properly qualified, to explore the more remote and unfrequented parts of the Alps. The fruits of these discoveries, comprising innumerable improvements, made in the descriptions, both of the genera and species, and extending the number of plants, from 1840, to 2486, were all embodied in the last edition of his great work already mentioned. A number of other papers on this subject, were collected in his "*Opuscula Botanica.*" The character of Haller, as a botanist, has not procured his system an extensive adoption. In classification, he followed a method of his own, founded upon the proportion of the stamina to the petals; a method which he found would not universally apply; and

which obliged him to borrow classes from other systems. The want of uniformity in his plan, and the superior simplicity of Linnæus, has given a decided superiority to the Swede. In accuracy of specific description, however, he is admirable, as well as in sagacity to detect generical affinities and distinctions; and upon the whole, scarcely any other writer has been more indefatigable, and his works will be found extremely useful to the botanical student.

These labours, however, occupied but one department of Haller's studies; and only a comparatively small portion of his time. From expatiating among the wonderful and interesting productions of the vegetable kingdom, which has led us to anticipate a little the course of our narrative, we must now follow him to a different avocation; apparently more revolting in itself, but which he pursued with no less enthusiasm and success. To a man of his keen sensibility, it may appear paradoxical to record, that the dissection of human bodies could be either an agreeable or a tolerable employment. But the love of science in him, seems to have overcome the reluctance, and even the tenderness of nature; and in 1742, he pronounced, in the University, a spirited eulogium, on this apparently repulsive occupation. With regard to himself, scarcely any other individual ever made a greater number of anatomical experiments with his own hand; and it has been asserted, that besides innumerable lower animals, he had dissected not less than five hundred human subjects. It was owing to this, that he made so many important discoveries, and that his investigations were rewarded with such unexampled success.

He seems early to have apprehended, that the knowledge of the distribution of the arterial system, had not kept pace with that of the bones, muscles, nerves and viscera; all which had been separately and ably treated by men of eminence. Haller wished, therefore, to illustrate more perfectly this part of the human frame; and he gave to the world a more complete system on the subject, than had yet appeared. This he performed in a valuable work, consisting of anatomical plates of the blood-vessels *in situ*; and of the most remarkable dissections which occurred in course of his experiments. These were greatly admired for the minute explanations, and learned notes which accompanied them. They were published annually, from 1743-53, in eight fasciculi, or folio volumes. He gave, at the same time, a number of curious tracts upon particular points in anatomy; which were afterwards collected into three volumes.

After the death of Boerhaave in 1738, Haller published the Prelections of his venerable master, from a manuscript copy of his own; which appeared in six volumes, with occasional additions and corrections. He likewise gave an edition of his "Methodus Studii Medici," in 1751; of which the greatest part was his own. In 1747, appeared one of Haller's most popular works, his Elements of Physiology; being an outline or sketch of his own system in that branch of science. It is a truly original performance, replete with matter, and an excellent compendium for the intelligent student. Various works of his own, with new editions of others, too numerous to be here particularly noticed, both in medicine and natural science, were published by him during his resi-

dence at Gottingen, which were afterwards collected in his *Opuscula*. Betwixt 1747 and 1756, he gave to the world a collection of *Dissertations*, composed by various authors,—on anatomy, in eight volumes,—on surgery, in five,—and on the practice of medicine, in seven. These shew, not only the extent of his learning, but the wonderful versatility of his talents, that could pass so rapidly from one subject to another, and treat with equal excellence of all.

Like most other eminent men, Haller was engaged in some warm disputes. He had for his antagonists, Hamberger, Van Swieten, Albinus, and La Mettrie. These attacked his *Essay on Respiration*, in which he established the doctrines regarding the mechanical part of that function, which have ever since been maintained. He had likewise some physiological discussions with Dr Whytt of Edinburgh, who held with him a learned and instructive controversy on Irritability; which Haller considered as a property of animated bodies, distinct from sensibility, and residing in different organs. This was a subject on which he has displayed his greatest originality; and which led to more philosophical conclusions relative to the laws of the animal economy, both in its sound and diseased state, than any other theory that had then been offered to the medical world. In forming these conclusions, he was led to make a set of experiments on living animals; the cruelty of which must have cost many painful struggles to such a man as Haller. Nothing, we may suppose, but the great utility to be derived from them to mankind, could have induced him to inflict sufferings of any kind; and indeed the compassion he felt for the

victims of his researches is often apparent in his narratives. In all his disputes, he shewed great moderation and command of temper, though he had not always the superiority in point of argument.

Such distinguished merits could not fail to attract attention, and accordingly they procured for the author a high degree of honourable fame. George II. his earliest patron, took a lively interest in his splendid success. He appointed him his first physician, as Elector of Hanover. He gave him the title of Aulic Counsellor; and in 1749, procured for him letters of nobility from the Emperor Francis of Germany, creating him Baron,—a title which Haller always declined. In a visit which his Majesty made to the University about this time, he signalized Haller with particular marks of approbation,—an honour which the grateful Professor acknowledged, in an English publication, entitled “A Short Narrative of the King’s Journey to Gottingen.”

Haller’s emoluments augmented in proportion to his celebrity; and honours flowed upon him from various quarters. He was elected member of almost all the academies of Europe; of the Royal Societies of Stockholm, London, and Paris. Seminaries of learning were anxious to enrol him among the number of their teachers. He received an invitation from Oxford in 1745, to fill the botanical chair, vacant by the death of Dillenius,—another from Utrecht in 1750, to succeed Albinus,—and a third from the King of Prussia, with the offer of a very considerable pension. Thus honoured by sovereigns, revered by men of science, and esteemed by all Europe, Haller had it in his power

to have attained the highest rank in the republic of letters. These promotions, however, and lucrative appointments, he chose to refuse ; in grateful attachment to that University, the founder of which had been the first to give him the honours best suited to gratify his wishes, and to afford scope for the full exercise of his varied abilities. The only promotion which he accepted, and which gave him any real satisfaction, was his election into the Great Council of Berne ; as it insured to him a retreat, with dignity, and probably with emolument, in his native city, whose former neglect had not cooled his affections.

At length in 1753, the precarious state of his health induced him to solicit permission from the regency of Hanover, to return to Switzerland, where he wished to spend the remainder of his days. Accordingly, he resigned his professorship, and quitted Gottingen, which had been so much indebted to him for its literary fame. His countrymen were now sensible of the honour they had derived from his character, and gladly encouraged his return. Such was the general joy of his fellow-citizens on his arrival, that medals were struck to commemorate the event. Having obtained, by lot, an office of small emolument in the magistracy, he entered with zeal into his municipal duties. Restored once more to the land of his nativity, the most splendid offers could never bribe him from his retirement. He declined a pressing invitation from Frederic II. in 1755, to superintend the academies of Prussia, and accept the Chancellorship of the University of Halle, vacant by the death of Wolf. The Empress Catharine II. of Russia, in 1767, made him offer of a very honour-

able and advantageous settlement at Petersburg, which he also refused ; and in 1770, he rejected the still more dignified promotion to the Chancellorship of the University of Gottingen, on the death of Mosheim, with a very lucrative appointment ; although George III. wrote personally, not only to Haller, but to the senate of Berne, requesting their influence to procure his acceptance.

This disinterested attachment, his grateful country rewarded with the most liberal and unbounded confidence ; and appreciated the generous sacrifices he had made, by employing his talents in the public service. A decree was passed, contrary to form, attaching him perpetually to the republic ; and an office created expressly for him, with a special clause that it should be suppressed after his death. In 1757, he was commissioned to reform the academy of Lausanne ; and next year was deputed by the Senate, to examine some curious remains of antiquity, discovered at Culm. He was appointed director of the Salt-works at Bex and Aigle, with an annual salary of £500. During the six years he held this office, he resided at La Roche, employing himself in improving the Salt-works, of which he gave a short account,—in making excursions into the neighbouring country, but especially in prepering and publishing his great work on physiology,—a work which was his favourite study,—the master-piece of his mighty genius,—and that which has established his right to the title of an inventor in science.

On his return to Berne, he was elected member of the Chamber of Appeal, for the German district,—of the committee for matrimonial affairs,—and for improving the small livings of the clergy

in the Pais de Vaud ; whereby their situation, which had been wretched and degrading, was rendered comfortable and respectable. He was also appointed perpetual assessor of the Council of Health, with a salary of £100 ; in consideration of his disinterested patriotism, in refusing so many tempting offers from foreign Courts, and preferring the welfare of his country to the advancement of his fortune. In these several offices he performed essential services to the State, by promoting the most useful institutions. In the Chamber of Health, he was particularly useful in forwarding the most important regulations ; such as prohibiting empirics, the recovering of drowned persons, and the preventing the contagion of an epidemic distemper, then prevalent among cattle. He showed himself a friend to humanity, by obtaining from Government a public establishment for orphans, of which he drew up the plan, and assisted in providing a fund ; and also a school for the education of the children of the more opulent classes. As a member of the Economical Society, he laboured much to reform the state of agriculture, and made many experiments for that purpose. In the meetings of the Great Council, he delivered his opinions with a manly freedom, and a lively eloquence, which did honour at once to the soundness of his judgment, and the feelings of his heart.

In 1766, and the following years, he appeared on a more public theatre, and displayed his abilities as a politician ; shewing the same capacity in adjusting national contests, as in illustrating science in the closet. He re-established the harmony, and settled the disputes between the Valais and the Canton of Berne, by a successful negotiation, in which

he fixed the boundaries of the two states. He was associated with the most enlightened characters of the Republic, in terminating the dissensions of Geneva. He drew up the principal dispatches to the Court of Versailles, on the subject of some projected changes; on which occasion he held a personal conference with the French Ambassador; and was employed to prepare the plan of a treaty between Rome and the Elector of Bavaria.

These political avocations did not suspend or interrupt Haller's professional studies; and it was then that some of his most celebrated and useful works were given to the world; his "*Opuscula Pathologica*," containing some curious facts in morbid anatomy; but especially his system of Physiology,—a work of permanent merit, and in which he has for ever rescued that difficult science from the degradation of being the sport of vain hypotheses, by establishing it on the only solid foundation of anatomical knowledge. The exquisite skill which he has displayed, in regard to the structure of the human body; his indefatigable researches into the discoveries and opinions of all his predecessors; and the judicious application he makes of them to illustrate and confirm his own system, are proofs at once of his industry, learning, penetration, and genius. Though much new light has since been thrown upon some of the animal functions, yet Haller's work is still the best systematic view of physiology; and it may in general be affirmed, that such a vast collection of well authenticated facts; so much accurate description, and truly scientific argumentation, were never before brought together on this important subject. His other anatomical writings of this date, are prin-

cipally comprised in his “Opera Anatomica Minora;” although there were many separate tracts which it would be tedious to enumerate. Many plagiarists have profited by Haller’s discoveries; and, in forming their own systems, have done little else than transcribed them, without having the gratitude to acknowledge their obligations to the great original. Though some of them have been contested by his contemporaries, yet his right to most of them remains inalienable and undisputed. The light which he threw upon incubation, ossification, excitability, and several other parts of the animal economy, will unquestionably secure to him a large and honourable share of fame with posterity.

On the conclusion of his public employments, and when he had arrived at his sixty-second year, he still prosecuted, in retirement, his literary labours, with undiminished activity; and even at that advanced age, he produced a set of volumes, which alone would have entitled him to the praise of a life well spent in the service of his profession. These were his four *Bibliothecæ*, viz. *Botanica*, *Anatomica*, *Chirurgica* and *Medica*; containing a chronological list of every book of every age, country, and language, respecting subjects connected with medicine, which had come to his knowledge; with brief analyses of the contents, and short biographies of the authors. No part of Haller’s writings affords a more striking example of the value of early and persevering industry, than these publications; and it is matter of astonishment, that in this manner he has noticed and reviewed not fewer than 11,000 volumes. He traces the history of each branch of medicine from its origin, through the preceding ages; giving in this way a connected and compendious view

of the whole science. This large field, his extensive erudition, enabled him to comprehend; and qualified him to distinguish all original doctrines, new facts and observations; and to guard against such errors as might mislead young and incautious practitioners; who are too apt to be influenced by theories, and prejudiced towards particular authors. These *Bibliothecæ* comprise eight quarto volumes, published between 1757-66, to which two others were afterwards added, from his papers, by Dr Tribolet and Brandis.

Haller furnished, at this period, many articles for the supplement to the *Paris Encyclopædia*, and the *Dictionary of Natural History*; and made extracts from eminent publications for the *Bibliothèque Raisonnée*. He wrote likewise three political romances in the German language; which seemed to have been occasioned by the vivid impression which his late engagements in civil and municipal affairs had made on his active imagination. In these he treated of three different forms of government. In the first, entitled "*Usona*," he exhibited a despotic monarch; sketching, with a masterly hand, the abuses of absolute authority, and setting forth the happy effects which might be derived from a virtuous and intelligent sovereign, even amidst the horrors of oriental despotism: In the second, called "*Fabius and Cato*," he describes, with a spirit and animation worthy of ancient Rome, but with a partiality natural to a republican, the aristocratical government,—as most friendly to the display of patriotism, and most congenial to the exertions of genius. In the third, named "*Alfred*," he displays the advantages of a limited monarchy, wherein the balance of power is wisely dis-

tributed ; and which, while it avoids the extremes of either, enjoys the benefits of both. In these romances, he discovered sound principles of legislation, great political sagacity, a deep knowledge of human nature, and an extensive acquaintance with history.

The soundest German critics place Haller among the most eminent of their poets ; and consider sublimity as the grand characteristic of his writings. They acknowledge that he improved the harmony and richness of his native tongue ; that he possessed the highest powers of invention, and great originality, both in his ideas and language. “ Haller, (says D’Israeli) is beautiful in his descriptions, sublime in his odes, and tender in his elegies. He is not the less to be admired as a satirist ; and Berne once trembled at the presence of its Juvenal. His numbers are highly polished ; and it is hard to render justice to the delicate language of his muse.” Critics have reproached him with obscurity and introducing new expressions ; but twenty successive editions of his poems, and their diffusion over all Europe, proved that they are not destitute of merit or interest. It deserves to be remarked, that, although Haller’s stupendous labours, in erudition and science render his poetical talents of inferior account ; yet had he confined himself to the muses, poetry alone would have immortalized his name.

There is still one department of writing, in which Haller remains to be considered. Amidst the almost incredible variety of his other pursuits, the study of theology, natural and revealed, had always occupied a conspicuous place. It has been observed, that at an early period of his studies, he had

been sceptical with regard to some of the peculiar doctrines and evidences of Christianity. His doubts, like those of Boyle, appear to have been purely philosophical, and not assumed in vindication of any depravity of principles, or licentiousness of manners. They arose, as we may gather from his letters, from his inability to comprehend the mysteries, or account for the miracles of the gospel,—especially the divinity and incarnation of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, &c.—subjects which have always been found revolting to the confidence of learning, and the pride of human understanding. How long these scruples continued to astound and perplex his belief, is not stated; but in 1732, in the preface to his poetry, he professed himself firmly convinced of the truth of natural and revealed religion; and even at that early period, undertook their defence.

The complete extirpation of his unbelief, he ascribes, as was noticed, to the study of natural science, on the one hand, and an impartial investigation of the Scriptures, on the other; the first, as he expresses it, by purging his soul of arrogance and pride, filled it with that poverty of spirit which of all the Christian graces, first enters the kingdom of heaven: The second convinced him, that the divine revelation conveyed in the Sacred Oracles, was a boon worthy of the merciful author of our nature to give; and such as was fit for guilty mortals to receive, with humble gratitude and reverence. Of these truths, he ever after proved himself, both in his life and writings, a zealous friend and an able advocate. He eagerly seized the numberless opportunities which his profession gave him, of pressing them on the conviction of all with

whom he had intercourse ; and recommending to their practice the virtues and precepts of Christianity. To his own mind, they were continually present, and he never suffered the hallowed recollection of them to be effaced. In a thousand incidents which passed unheeded by the vulgar, he could discern the image and perfections of the Deity ; and in whatever company or circumstances he happened to be placed, he never heard that Great Name mentioned, without some pious expression, and with his eyes or hands lifted up to heaven.

The necessity of the existence of a supreme Being ; and the other fundamental principles of natural religion, he argued from a comprehensive view of creation, in its greatest effects, as well as in its minutest arrangements. Of his disgust and horror at all attempts to convert the works of the Creator into arguments against his providence, or his moral government, he gave a remarkable proof, in 1747, by rejecting the dedication which La Mettrie offered to prefix to his book, intitled, "*L' Homme Machine* ;" a book which maintained the doctrines of Materialism, and from which Struensee and Brandt, and many others, imbibed much of their infidelity ; and he declared, in various literary journals, that he neither acknowledged, as his friend or his disciple, a man who entertained such impious notions. In a preface, which he published in 1751, to "*Formey's abridgment of the Examen du Pyrrhonisme*," he paints, in the strongest colours, the dreadful effects of infidelity, both to society and individuals.

He published also an Extract from Ditton's "*Truth of the Resurrection* ;" which he acknowledged to have first cleared any doubts he enter-

tained on that subject. He owns at the same time, that he received infinite satisfaction from the study of the New Testament; because he was never more certain of holding converse with the Deity, than when he read his will in that divine book. Another work, which he gave to the public on this important subject, was his "Letters, concerning several late attempts of Free-thinkers, yet living, against Revelation;" written in 1775, in German, expressly for refuting the objections to Christianity, advanced in so lively and dangerous a manner by Voltaire, in his "Questions on the Encyclopedia."

The volume by which his piety is best known in this country, is his "Letters to his Daughter, on the Truth of the Christian Revelation;" written in German; and breathing throughout, the tenderest sentiments of parental affection. In these he has exhibited, in an incredibly small compass, a most complete defence of Christianity. He has collected the best arguments of the ablest divines, arranged them in a judicious order, and brought them to bear on his subject, with united force, and with an effulgence of light, sufficient to dispel the thickest clouds of ignorance and prejudice. The divinity and atonement of Christ, he maintains in opposition to Arians and Socinians, who reject from the Bible what they cannot explain; and think to serve the cause of religion, by lowering divine truths to human conception. Haller, condemning the impiety of thus admitting or rejecting at will, receives with pious awe, even what he cannot comprehend; and with humble confidence, walks forward into those regions of mystery, where the grandeur and incomprehensibility of the surrounding objects, lay prostrate the powers of the human mind. He

shews, by manifold analogies taken from the processes of nature, both in the animal and the intellectual world, that mysteries may be credible, though they exceed our comprehension ; and may afford room for the exercise of reason in the service of the Christian cause.

The unshaken firmness of his faith, could not always repel those anxious solitudes about futurity, from which the best of men have not been exempted. He had his hours of despondency and langour ; which sometimes clouded his prospects with dark apprehensions. These have been ascribed, but without any just reason, to the narrowness of the Calvinistic principles, in which he had been educated. They were obviously the effects of a sensitive temperament, and a lively imagination ; and sprung from his constitutional irritability, rather than his early prejudices. It is, however, a pleasing satisfaction to be informed, that reason and religion rose superior to these gloomy depressions. In a letter, which he wrote a few days before his decease, he speaks of the awful grandeur of eternity, with hope rather than with fear.

For many years, Haller's declining health had restrained his exertions in the more active scenes of life, and confined him almost entirely to his own house. Infirmities had accumulated, which it was evident he could not long support ; but the most painful of his maladies, was a form of retrocedent gout. These, however, did not put a period to his studies ; for his favourite employment of writing was continued, till within a few days of his dissolution. He preserved his senses and composure to the last moment,—meeting death with the calmness of a philosopher, and what is tran-

scendently superior, with the lively faith of a Christian. His last words were addressed to Mr Rosselet, the physician that attended him: "My friend," said he calmly, with his hand on his pulse, "the artery no longer beats," and immediately expired, at the age of sixty-nine, on the 12th of December, 1777.

In his person, Haller was tall and majestic, of a noble and expressive countenance. He had at times an open smile, always a pleasing tone of voice, usually low, and seldom elevated, even when he was most animated. He was fond of unbending himself in society; and on these occasions, was remarkably cheerful, polite, and attentive. He would converse with the ladies on fashions, modes of dress, and other trifles, with as much ease as if he had never secluded himself from the world. When he conversed on any topic of literature or science, his knowledge was so extensive, that he seemed to have made that his particular study.

He was one of the most voluminous writers, and universally informed men in Europe; and his profound erudition is apparent to all who are the least conversant with his works. One of his particular friends, and most eloquent of his eulogists, Tschärner, thus speaks of the extent and variety of his information: "He possessed a fundamental knowledge of natural history, was well versed in history, ancient and modern,—in the state of agriculture, manufactnres, trade, population, literature, and languages of the respective nations of Europe. He had read with attention, the most remarkable voyages and travels, and was particularly conversant with the late discoveries, which tend to illus-

trate the geography of the globe ; he had perused many thousand novels and plays, and possessed such an astonishing memory, that he could detail their contents with the utmost precision." The feats of Haller's memory were almost incredible. Having received a dangerous fall in 1766, which he was afraid might have impaired its powers, he instantly tried to recollect, and write down the names of all the rivers which flow into the Ocean ; and was not satisfied, until, by consulting his map, he was assured he had not forgot one. On another occasion, he very much surprised some foreigners, in recounting to them all the oriental dynasties mentioned in ancient history, with the dates and events of the principal reigns.

His acquaintance with languages was very remarkable ; he spoke and wrote with equal facility, Latin, French, German, English, and Italian ; and carried on an extensive correspondence in them all. He learned the Swedish after he was forty years of age, from some of his pupils, in course of his anatomical operations ; and except the Russian and Polish, he was so well acquainted with the other European tongues, as to converse with the natives in their respective idioms. Many volumes of his letters were preserved, on a variety of subjects in physiology, natural history, politics, morality, and religion. " These," (says M. Bonnet of Geneva), " display his genius, his understanding, and the goodness of his heart, more fully than any of his publications. His style, concise, energetic, yet picturesque, corresponds with the strength and originality of his ideas ; and he speaks with no less sublimity than conviction, of the great truths of natural and revealed religion. Though he treats

the numerous advocates for infidelity, and particularly Voltaire, with sufficient severity, yet his heat is the ardour of conviction, and did not proceed from either pique, or a spirit of contradiction; he seemed as if he was personally interested in all the questions in revelation, and pleaded its cause as if it had been his own. He particularly censures the materialists, who endeavour to deduce mechanically the formation of organized matter. In a word, his philosophy was entirely practical, because it was entirely Christian." Of letters written to him, six volumes in Latin, and three in German, have been published; but his own, of which Bonnet possessed seven manuscript volumes, it is to be regretted, have only casually appeared.

A more industrious literary life than that of Haller, cannot be imagined. Every moment of his time was occupied; the composition of memoirs and articles for Reviews, were only his pastimes. His labours with the pen were unremitting; and such was his invincible ardour, that, having one day broken his right arm, his surgeon, when he came to dress it, found him employed in writing with his left hand. He read most new publications, and so eager was he in the perusal, that he laid them upon the table even when he was at dinner, occasionally looking into them, and marking those parts with a pencil, which he afterwards extracted or commented upon. These were usually written on small pieces of paper, which he afterwards fastened together, in their order,—a method he learned from Leibnitz. During a long state of delicate health, his bed was in his library, where he sometimes spent months without ever going abroad. There he ate his meals, and with the society of his family, and

his books, he concentrated within this narrow space, all he held most dear on earth. He communicated to those around him, a taste for scientific pursuits. His house was a sort of asylum for learning. He was assisted by his pupils, who had the charge of his library, and his theatre. His wife acquired the art of drawing and painting, for the purpose of rendering herself useful to him. His children, friends, and fellow-citizens, all regarded it as their duty to contribute to his labours.

Haller was three times married. His first, and second wife, were natives of Berne ; and both died at Gottingen, which he called the grave of his wives. His third, daughter of a professor at Jena, survived him. He left eight children, four sons and four daughters, all of whom he lived to see established.

His uncommon sensibility subjected him to quick alternatives of pain and pleasure. He was impatient under sickness, as well from his extreme irritability, as from the interruption it occasioned in his literary pursuits. He was therefore fond of taking violent remedies ; and in his latter years he accustomed himself to opium, which, being only a temporary palliative, rather increased his natural impatience.

In his retreat at Berne, he had long become an object of respect and veneration ; especially to strangers, who never visited Switzerland without seeing him. Princes loaded him with the most enviable marks of esteem, and learned men were proud to lay their offerings on his altar. In 1776, he received the order of the Polar Star, from Gustavus III. King of Sweden. The Emperor of Germany, Joseph II. in course of his travels, paid him a

visit, and conversed with him two hours,—an honour which stabbed Voltaire to the heart, as he had passed by Ferney without waiting on him. His Majesty found the Baron labouring under the disorder that soon carried him off; and on his return to Vienna, he sent him a present of wine, of uncommon excellence. This tribute of private friendship from a monarch, would have proved grateful to a man of Haller's sensibility, but before he had it in his power to appreciate its value, he had paid the common debt of nature. The Emperor purchased his library, consisting of about 20,000 volumes, for £2000, which he sent to Milan.

Considered as a man of piety, and a zealous advocate of Christianity, Haller's is a truly exemplary and venerable character. It has been usual, as we have repeatedly noticed, for modern infidels to associate with themselves, if possible, men of eminent literary talents, and in this they have not unfrequently been successful; but Haller disdained such an association; of which a signal instance has been given, in his rejecting the impudent and insidious flattery of La Mettrie, who wished to have held him up to Europe as the patron and abettor of materialism. He was not only formed by nature for great designs, but guided by religion in the exercise of his faculties. The unbounded extent, and the useful application of his learning, cannot fail to strike both believers and infidels,—the former will rejoice in the acquisition of so able a defender, in so good a cause,—and the latter will no doubt be surprised and disappointed, that so universal a genius could believe Christianity.

REV. JOHN NEWTON.

THE particulars of Mr Newton's life, are perhaps more extensively and familiarly known, than some others that have been admitted into the present selection. The conspicuous part he acted as a member of the church for upwards of forty years,—his useful labours as a writer,—and the general esteem in which he was held as a man of sincere piety, and sound Christian principles, all tended to interest the public in his history, and have conferred upon his name no ordinary share of popularity. These circumstances, however, cannot form any reasonable apology for omitting to record him, as a remarkable instance, on the list of reformed profligates ; neither will he, on this account, stand the less prominent and distinguished among other monuments to the signal victories of divine truth. We have, in his life, a deplorable example of early depravity, and of inveterate moral corruption. Few cases, perhaps, ever exceeded his, in the malignity of its symptoms, or could appear in all probability more hopeless of reformation. His history, therefore, whether considered with reference to the instructive exhibition it unfolds, of a succession of striking and wonderful interpositions, manifested through a long train of remarkable facts ; or as displaying the singular methods adopted by providence for his arrestment and recovery,—will be found to add no common testimony to the un-

changeable truth, and the beneficial tendency of the Christian revelation.

JOHN NEWTON was born in London, July 24th, 1725. His parents were respectable, though not in affluent circumstances. His father was many years master of a ship in the Mediterranean trade; he had great knowledge of the world; was a man of very good sense, and exemplary in his moral conduct, but without any serious impressions of religion; and of stern and severe manners. His mother was a member of the Dissenting Church, and a pious woman. She was of a delicate constitution, and loved retirement; and made it the chief business and pleasure of her life to instruct her only child in the elements of religious knowledge. She stored his memory with whole chapters and select portions of Scripture, with poems, hymns, catechisms, &c. having destined him in her own mind for the ministry; and had she lived till he was of a proper age, he was to have received his education at the University of St Andrew's, in Scotland. The progress he made under her tuition was rapid, and extraordinary for one of his years; as he was naturally of a sedentary turn, had an excellent capacity, and was very much addicted to his books. At the age of four, he could read with ease and accuracy, and shortly after, he commenced the study of Latin.

But these early and promising attainments were left to wither in the bud, by the premature death of his mother, whom he had the misfortune to lose when only seven years old. His father married a second time, and this new mother, though she seemed at first willing to adopt and educate her step-son, yet a child of her own soon supplanted

him in her affections, and engrossed nearly the whole attention of the father ; so that he was left to follow his own amusements, or to mingle with idle and profligate boys, whose vices and bad habits he speedily acquired. He was sent for about two years to a boarding-school at Stratford, in Essex, but he made no proficiency in any branch of learning, except his Latin, which he prosecuted with great eagerness. At eleven years of age, he was taken on board his father's ship, went to sea with him, and made several voyages to the Mediterranean. In this employment he continued until 1742, when his father quitted the sea. Several attempts had been made in the meanwhile, to settle him in some permanent business. He had been placed, during his last voyage, in the house of a most respectable merchant at Alicant in Spain, with very advantageous prospects, had he conducted himself with propriety ; but in course of a few months, his master found it necessary, on account of his misbehaviour, to dismiss him.

On his return home, a proposal was made to send him for some years to Jamaica. To this he consented, and was to have embarked in course of a week. While preparation was making for the voyage, he was sent by his father to a place near Maidstone in Kent ; partly on business, and partly to visit some distant relations of his mother, who lived in that neighbourhood. During this short journey, an unexpected occurrence took place, which disconcerted the plan of his settlement in the West Indies. In the house of his relation, where he met with the kindest reception, there were two daughters, the eldest of which, then under fourteen years of age, made such a deep and

instantaneous impression on the heart of her kinsman, that he could scarcely bear the thought of separating from her for a moment, much less of living for years at such a distance as Jamaica. In consequence of this romantic attachment, he abandoned the idea of going abroad ; and as he durst not communicate this resolution to his father, he determined not to return to London until the ship had sailed. Instead of three days, as was at first intended, he remained in Kent three weeks, and thus completely disappointed his friends in their schemes of mercantile preferment. His father, though highly displeased at this conduct, became reconciled ; and in a short while he sent him as a common sailor on a voyage to the east coast of Italy. He returned home in December, 1743, without meeting with any extraordinary occurrence, if we except a remarkable dream which he had, while lying off Venice, that made such a powerful, though transient impression on his mind, as tended to check him for a while, in his thoughtless career of profligacy.

Shortly after his return, he had again the misfortune to incur his father's displeasure, and frustrate his anxious endeavours for his welfare, by repeating and protracting his visits to Kent, in the same imprudent manner as he had done before. His carelessness and disobedience irritated the feelings, and alienated the affections of his parent, to such a degree, as almost induced him to disown his son. Cast in this manner almost destitute upon the world, and before any suitable employment again offered itself, he was seized by a press-gang, and carried on board the Harwich man-of-war. As the French fleet were then hovering upon the coast, and a war daily expected, his father, had he been willing, could not have obtained his release ;

but he had no objections he should remain in the navy, and having procured him a recommendation to the Captain, he was in consequence sent upon the quarter-deck as a midshipman. In this post, but for his unsettled mind, and disorderly habits, he might have conducted himself with ease and respectability. But he soon gave new occasion of offence, and lost the favour of his Captain, by the same want of prudence and consideration that had already baffled all the exertions of his friends to promote his interest. While the Harwich lay in the Downs, being bound for the East Indies, he availed himself of an opportunity of going ashore, and following the dictates of a restless passion, he went to take a last leave of the object which had so completely possessed and engrossed his thoughts. This rash step, being a breach of order, proved highly displeasing to his Commander; but it was followed by another, far more dishonourable.

While they lay at Plymouth, he began to reflect on the tediousness and uncertainties of a voyage to the East Indies, and imagined if he could meet with his father, who was then at Torbay, on account of some ships lately lost, in which he had a share, he might easily get transferred into better service. Upon the faith of this probability, he resolved, without further deliberation, to leave the ship at all events. This he accomplished, but in the worst manner possible; for being sent one day in the boat, to prevent others from deserting, he shamefully betrayed his trust, and deserted himself. He travelled the greater part of two days across the country, on the road to Torbay, every thing appearing to go on smoothly; but when he had nearly reached the place, and thought to have seen his father within two hours, he was

met by a small party of soldiers, whom he could not avoid or deceive. They carried him immediately back to Plymouth, through the streets of which he proceeded, guarded like a felon, and overwhelmed with shame, indignation, and fear. After being kept in confinement for two days, he was sent on ship-board, where he was put in irons; he was next publicly stripped, lashed, and degraded from his office; he was forbidden the company, and even the sympathies of his former associates, brought down to the level, and exposed to the insults of the lowest of the crew.

In this state of abject misery, and gloomy despondency, his mind became alternately the prey of dismal reflections and desperate resolutions. Whether he looked inward or outward, he could perceive nothing but darkness and despair. Sometimes he was tempted to throw himself into the sea, which, he believed, would at once put a final period to all his sorrows; again, he would form designs against the life of his captain, as the author of all the wretchedness and abuses he was suffering; and the hope of accomplishing this diabolical purpose, was almost the only reason that made him willing to prolong his own existence. At his more sober intervals, he would cherish the hope of yet seeing better days, of returning to England, and having all his wishes crowned by a happy union with the object of his affections, from whom he had seen himself forcibly torn away, and had felt so many distressing fears at the improbability of ever seeing her again. Such were the harassing agitations, dividing his thoughts between hope and despair, regret and revenge, that occupied him during the remainder of the passage.

Having business to transact at Madeira, they put

in to that island ; and here he obtained an unexpected release ; or rather exchanged one species of slavery for another. On the morning when they were preparing to sail, two men from a Guinea ship, which lay near, had entered on board the Harwich ; and the Commander having ordered two others to be sent in their room, Mr Newton, glad to avail himself of the opportunity, requested to be dismissed on this occasion, alongst with an old companion ; a petition which was very readily complied with. In less than half an hour from his being asleep in his hammock, he found himself safely on board another ship, and placed, as he fondly believed, beyond the reach of further insult or degradation. The vessel he had now entered was bound to Sierra Leone, and the adjacent parts of what is called the windward coast of Africa. The captain knew his father, received him kindly, and probably would have been his friend, had he taken care to avoid his former errors. But, instead of profiting by his adversities, he appeared to have become only the more hardened and incorrigible ; and, of course, very soon forfeited the esteem of his new master.

He continued in this situation for about six months, at which time the ship was preparing to leave the coast for the West Indies. This voyage, he perceived, would prove not only disagreeable, but perhaps dangerous to him, considering the terms on which he stood with his commander ; who, most probably, would have sent him on board a man-of-war, an alternative more dreadful to him than death itself ; and to prevent this, he determined to remain in Africa ; flattering himself with the idea that he would there have a better opportunity of improving his fortune, as he found some

of his countrymen had done, by trafficking in slaves. He entered into the service of one of the traders on that coast, who had acquired considerable wealth, and was a proprietor of the fourth part of the ship, from which he had just obtained his discharge. As he received no compensation for the time he had been on board, except a bill upon the owners in England, which was never paid; he found himself, at his landing on the island of Benanoes, like one ship-wrecked, with little more than the clothes he had on his back. In this new station, instead of rising to wealth and consequence, as he expected, he was reduced to greater misery than ever; and encountered a series of hardships and indignities, almost beyond what common slaves are doomed to suffer. He could have lived tolerably well in his employment, and perhaps even retrieved his character, had not his master been entirely under the direction of a black woman, who lived with him as his wife, and who, for reasons unknown, had from the first conceived a strong prejudice against Mr Newton. She was a person of some importance, had great influence over her husband, and consequently prepossessed him with the same hostile feelings towards the unhappy object of her strange antipathies.

His treatment from her, especially in his master's absence, was a revolting mixture of unprovoked insult and capricious cruelty. On one occasion, when labouring under a severe fit of sickness, he had the misfortune to be left in the hands of this merciless woman, who, far from compassionating his helpless and forlorn condition, treated him with the utmost neglect; and though possessed of abundance, she scarcely allowed him what was sufficient to sustain life. Sometimes it was with diffi-

culty he could procure a draught of cold water, when burning with a fever. His bed was a mat spread upon a board or chest, with a log for his pillow. Often he would gladly have eaten, "but no one gave unto him;" except when in a fit of good humour, his mistress would now and then send him victuals on her own plate, after she had dined,—a pittance which he received with thankful eagerness, as the most needy beggar does an alms. At times, she would call him to her table, that she might administer this capricious bounty with her own hand. On one of these occasions, being exceedingly weak and exhausted, he dropped the plate,—a loss which mortified and disappointed him in a degree, which those who live in plenty can hardly conceive; but though the table was loaded with victuals, she refused to supply him with more, and had the cruelty to turn this distressing misadventure into a subject of mirth and ridicule: Such was the extreme of destitution to which he was reduced, that he was sometimes compelled to go by night, and pull up roots in the plantation, which he devoured raw upon the spot, for fear of being discovered and punished as a thief. Strangers occasionally relieved his wants out of compassion, and even the slaves in chains would have brought him a portion of their own slender allowance secretly, for they durst not be seen or known to do it. Of this ill usage he complained to his master, when he returned from a voyage to Rio Nuna, where he had been absent on business; but he was not credited. He was, however, taken on board the second voyage, which removed him out of the reach of domestic persecution; but his bad fortune seemed to attend him wherever he went.

He lived for a time on very good terms with all his companions, until a brother trader maliciously persuaded his master that he was dishonest. This was a vice to which he never was addicted, not even in his greatest distress, and when he had the strongest temptations to fraud. On the contrary, whatever other good principles he had relinquished, he still retained his honesty; which seemed to be the only remains of a virtuous education, that he could now boast of. The charge, however, was believed, and he was condemned without evidence. From that time he was used very harshly; whenever his master left the vessel, he was locked up on deck, with a pint of rice, for his day's allowance; and but for the opportunity of catching fish sometimes, he must have fallen a victim to starvation.

His sufferings, from the want of clothes, and the inclemency of the weather, were not less severe. His whole suit was a shirt, a pair of trowsers, a cotton handkerchief instead of a cap, and a piece of cloth about two yards long, to supply the want of upper garments; and thus accoutred, he was frequently exposed for thirty or perhaps forty hours together, without shelter, in incessant rains, accompanied with strong gales of wind. He was so ashamed of his mean appearance, that when a ship's boat came to the island, he would run to the woods to hide himself from the sight of a stranger; and to preserve some degree of cleanliness, he would go pensive and solitary at the dead of night, to wash his only shirt upon the rocks, and afterwards put it on wet, that it might dry upon his back while he slept. Things continued in this state, or with little variation, for nearly twelve months, when he obtained his master's consent to

live with another trader on the same island,—a change which contributed greatly both to his comfort and his advantage ; as he was now decently clothed and fed, treated as a companion, and even trusted to a considerable amount in the management of the business. This alteration in his circumstances, together with the despair of ever seeing England again, began to reconcile him to his condition, and he even entertained thoughts of settling in the country. His deliverance, however, was nearer than he expected, and that providence, which wisely rules the destinies of man, had made arrangements for his return, of which he knew nothing.

During the period of his cruel treatment, he had written once or twice to his father, describing his condition, and desiring his assistance. This application procured an order from his father, to the Captain of a Liverpool trader, then fitting out for Gambia and Sierra Leone, to bring his son home. The ship, with this order, providentially arrived at a time when Mr Newton was employed at one of his master's factories, within a mile of the shore ; otherwise the vessel might have left the coast without either seeing or hearing of him, as he was just on the point of setting out in quest of trade, some hundred miles up the country. This welcome intelligence of an invitation home, had it reached him when he was sick and starving, would have been heard with rapturous delight ; but from the favourable change in his prospects, he was disposed to treat it with indifference ; and in order to gain his compliance, the messenger had to fabricate a story of a legacy, and an estate of £400, per annum, left him by an aged relation lately

dead. This stratagem, together with the remembrance of his friend in Kent, who never ceased, amidst all his wretchedness, to haunt his waking dreams, proved sufficient to draw him from his savage retreat. Thus was he suddenly released from a captivity of about fifteen months; a deliverance of which he had not indulged a wish or a thought, within an hour before it took place.

He embarked with the Captain, who kindly promised to lodge him in his own cabin, and make him his companion; and after a tedious voyage, in which they suffered various hardships, from severe storms, and scarcity of provisions, they reached the northern coast of Ireland, and anchored in Lough Swilly, on the 8th of April, 1748, much disabled by the weather, and with their very last victuals boiling in the pot. Here they were delayed some time, refitting the ship; during which Mr Newton wrote home to intimate his arrival to his father, who had given up all expectation of hearing that his son was alive, as the vessel he was in had not been heard of for eighteen months. The letter reached him only a few days before he embarked for Hudson's Bay, where he intended to have taken his son, had he returned in time to England. This intention, however, he did not get accomplished; nor had he the satisfaction of seeing him, as he sailed from the Nore on the same day that Mr Newton arrived in Liverpool, and died at York-Fort, of which he had been appointed governor, in 1750. Thus was this returning prodigal singularly disappointed, in so near an opportunity of asking forgiveness for the uneasiness his disobedience had occasioned, to a relenting and reconciled parent.

The gentleman who was owner of the ship that

had brought him home, received him with the greatest tenderness, and gave him the strongest assurances of his friendship. He immediately proposed to give him the command of a ship,—an offer which Mr Newton very prudently declined for the present, considering he had hitherto been unsettled and careless, and must acquire farther experience in business, before he ventured to undertake such a charge. He consented, however, to go as mate in a vessel bound for the coast of Africa, to purchase slaves. In this voyage, he visited again the scenes of his former captivity, though he was now in very different circumstances. He was courted and caressed by those who once despised him. Some lime shrubs which he had planted in his wretched servitude, and which had occasioned a sarcastical remark of his master, on the probability of his returning in the capacity of a rich merchant, to reap the fruit of his labours, he now found were grown tall trees; and promised to verify a prediction, so unlikely at the time ever to be realized.

During eight months, they were employed upon the coast; and although Mr Newton's business exposed him to innumerable dangers, both from the climate and from the natives, who watched every opportunity for mischief, and often acted with great cruelty and treachery, poisoning the white men, or way-laying them in their journeys through the woods, yet he was singularly preserved both at sea and on shore. Among other remarkable escapes, he mentions one that made a very salutary impression upon him at the time, and remained long on his memory. While lying at Rio Cestors, he had the charge of providing wood and fresh water, which he brought from the shore; the only

service he had to perform in the boat. He generally took advantage of the sea breeze to proceed up the river in the afternoon, where he procured his lading in the evening, and returned on board in the morning, with the land-wind. Several of these little voyages he had made without meeting any accident, although the boat was old and crazy, and almost unfit for use. One day having dined on board, he was preparing to return to the river as usual; when the Captain came up from the cabin, and called him on board again; saying, that he wished him to remain that day in the ship; without, however, assigning any other cause for this countermand, than the mere suggestion of the moment. Mr Newton was not a little surprised at this, as the boat had never before been sent away without him. Another man was accordingly sent in his place; but he went to return no more, for the boat sunk that very night, and he perished in the river. The news of this event, when related next morning, struck Mr Newton very forcibly, as a singular interposition of providence for his preservation.

From Sierra Leone, the ship sailed for Antigua, and thence to Charleston, in South Carolina, to dispose of her cargo. After finishing this voyage, she returned to Liverpool; and as soon as affairs were settled, Mr Newton immediately repaired to Kent, after an interval of seven years, which had now elapsed since his first visit. No obstacle seemed now to oppose the accomplishment of his wishes; he had renounced his former follies,—his interest was established,—friends on all sides were ready to give their consent; even his father before his departure from England, had given his sanction to the union; accordingly, on the 1st of Fe-

bruary, 1750, he was made happy in obtaining possession of the object to which he had been so long and so ardently devoted.

Not to interrupt the regular course of the narrative, by introducing details of his character into the history of his commercial adventures, little has as yet been said regarding his moral or religious sentiments,—the causes of his unbelief, or the means by which he was gradually recovered. His infidelity, like that of most of his sceptical brethren, will be found to have originated chiefly in the depravity of his own heart, and with but little assistance from the arguments or example of others ; while his conversion appears to have been effected, partly from his own reflections on the many remarkable deliverances he had experienced in course of his voyages, and partly from occasional examination of the Scriptures, and the peculiar discoveries that by degrees broke in upon his mind, both of his own guilt, and the remedy for its expiation.

It was already noticed, that his excellent mother had taken particular care, both by example and instruction, to season his mind with virtuous principles, and impress it with a veneration for every thing sacred. But his corrupt propensities had at a very early age, gathered sufficient strength to break through these wholesome restraints, and to obliterate from his memory every trace of piety or parental admonition. About the period of his first voyages, his conduct and temper were exceedingly various ; and he was often disturbed with religious convictions. When with his wicked companions, and none to check him, he would swear and blaspheme, as if he had lost all sense of religion ; at other times, a pious book,

a passage in the Bible, or the sudden death of a companion, would have set him to break off his profane practices; and produced a temporary reformation. Yet so strangely had he contrived to reconcile vice and devotion, that when determined on committing actions which he knew to be criminal, he could not go on quietly, until he had first dispatched his ordinary task of prayer, every minute of which he grudged as lost time; and when this was finished, his conscience was in some measure pacified, and he could rush into folly with little reluctance.

This alternate struggle between compunction and remorse, between the pleasures of sin, and the remonstrances of conscience, continued for more than two years; when he was induced to lay aside this semblance of religion, formal and superficial as it was. In a petty shop at Middleburgh in Holland, he chanced to meet with a volume of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, and he soon fell a dupe to the plausible but insidious doctrines of that writer. His Lordship, it is well known, ranks among those dangerous authors who have appeared against revealed religion. He possessed great delicacy of taste, had a lively and fertile imagination, and the charms of his fascinating eloquence procured him many admirers, and have led, perhaps, not a few unwarily to entertain groundless prejudices against Christianity. His elegant but declamatory style suited the romantic turn of Mr Newton's mind. Unaware of its tendency, he imagined he had found in this book a valuable guide. It was continually in his hands, and he could even repeat large portions of it; and though it produced no immediate effects, it operated like a slow poi-

son, the more fatally that it found in his own inclinations, a congenial nature to work upon.

The opinions he had now imbibed, were afterwards confirmed by the objections and arguments of one of his principal companions on board the Harwich man-of-war; a person of talents, and observation, but an expert and specious infidel, whose zeal was equal to his address. He had gained the confidence of Mr Newton, who was fond of his society, by first speaking in favour of religion; but perceiving his attachment to the *Characteristics*, he gave him such representations of his Lordship's arguments, as speedily effaced from his mind the last remains of piety and virtue. He now renounced all hope and belief in the gospel, plunged with bold and reckless hardihood into infidelity, and seemed to all appearance irrecoverably given over to a reprobate mind. When he quitted the Harwich, where he had been kept under some restraint, to go on board the Guinea ship, one of his reasons for preferring the exchange, was, that being among strangers, he could then sin without disguise, and be as abandoned as he pleased, without reproof or control; and he certainly proceeded with a very high hand, not only practising all sorts of wickedness himself, but making it his study to tempt and seduce others.

The first check he received in this bea:llong career, was the exile and solitary wretchedness which he endured in the service of the African trader. By being thus banished, as it were, and almost excluded from society; he was incapable, however much he might have the desire, of communicating to others this moral pestilence and infection. His abject circumstances proved an antidote against spreading the contagion; even the

few negroes who conversed with him, instead of imitating, rather shunned and despised him. The chastisements of affliction had, in some degree, subdued and sunk his spirit; he had lost that fierceness and resolution which seemed inherent in his temper, and had formerly instigated him to commit the desperate crimes of suicide and murder: but he was no farther changed than a tiger tamed by hunger; his reflections were not those of guilt, or of gratitude for his preservations, nor was his heart at all bowed down to a wholesome repentance. His worldly prospects were certainly dreary; but his soul was still darker than his outward condition; and even when his fortune began to improve and to augur better, his habits of profligacy continued as hardened and inveterate as ever.

On his first homeward voyage from Africa, after being released from his miserable servitude, having no particular business to employ his thoughts, except when he would sometimes amuse himself with mathematics, he gave a loose to every species of impiety and profaneness. "I know not," says he, "that I ever in my life met so daring a blasphemer. Not content with common oaths and imprecations, I daily invented new ones; so that I was often seriously reproved by the captain, who was himself a very passionate man, and by no means circumspect in his expressions."

Among the vices to which sailors are too generally addicted, there was one to which Mr Newton never felt any inclination, that of drinking; although he could go to a fearful excess in every other extravagance. Sometimes, however, from frolic and a disposition to mischief, he would promote and encourage this indulgence in others. One of those revels, at his own expense, and by

his proposal, had most likely proved fatal to himself, but for one of those signal interpositions of an invisible hand, which had so often preserved his life. He had challenged a party of four or five one evening, to try who could hold out longest in drinking geneva and rum alternately; a contest, for which Mr Newton was very unfit, as his head was always incapable of bearing much liquor. A large sea shell supplied the place of a glass. He began by proposing, as a toast, some imprecation against the person who should start first. This proved to be himself. Inflamed with intoxication, he arose and danced on the deck like a madman, when his hat went over board. He made an attempt to recover it, and would, in the space of a moment, have plunged into the water, when some person caught hold of his clothes, and pulled him back. This was an amazing escape, as he could not swim, had he even been sober; his companions were too much intoxicated to save him, and the rest of the ship's company were asleep.

This, and many other similar deliverances, he experienced, but they produced no salutary effect at the time. He possessed the same unconcern when visited by sickness, and even believing himself to be near death. The admonitions of conscience being so often repelled, had grown weaker and weaker, and at length had entirely ceased. "In a word," says he, "I seemed to have every mark of final impenitence and rejection; neither judgements nor mercies made any impression on me."

The storms they encountered, especially off the coast of Ireland, in March, 1748, and the imminent danger to which they were in consequence exposed, appear to have been the first and most effectual means of rousing him to serious reflec-

tion. The tempest had continued many days, and from the leaky state of the vessel they expected every moment to go to the bottom. "I began," says he, "to think of my former religious professions,—the extraordinary turns of my life,—the calls, warnings, and deliverances I had met with,—the licentious course of my conversation, particularly my unparalleled effrontery in making the gospel history the constant subject of profane ridicule. I waited with fear and impatience to receive my inevitable doom ; but when I saw beyond all probability that there was still hope of respite, and heard that the ship was cleared of water, there arose a gleam of hope. I thought I saw the hand of God displayed in our favour. I began to pray : but I could not draw near to a reconciled God, and call him Father. The comfortless principles of infidelity were deeply riveted. The great question was now, how to obtain faith. One of the first helps I received, was from examining the New Testament more carefully ; and from thence I concluded, that though I could not say from my heart that I believed the gospel, yet I would for the present take it for granted ; and that by studying it in this light, I should be more and more confirmed in it.

Modern infidels will say, (for I know their manner), that I was desirous to persuade myself into this opinion. I confess I was ; and so would they be, if the Lord should shew them, as he was pleased to shew me at that time, the absolute necessity of some expedient to interpose between a merciful God, and a sinful soul. Upon the gospel scheme I saw at least a peradventure of hope, but on every other side, I was surrounded with black unfathomable despair. There were no persons on

board to whom I could open myself with freedom, concerning the state of my soul ; none from whom I could ask advice. As to books, I had a New Testament, a volume of Bishop Beveridge's Sermons, and Stanhope's Thomas a Kempis, which I had often read before, to pass away the time, but with the same indifference as if it had been a romance. In perusing the New Testament, I was struck with several passages,—particularly that of the prodigal, which I thought had never been so nearly exemplified as by myself."

Such was the state of Mr Newton's views and impressions on their arrival in Ireland. He had satisfactory evidence in his own mind of the truth of the gospel, as considered in itself, and of its exact suitableness to answer all his wants. So far he was no longer an infidel. He had renounced his former profaneness, and had taken up some right notions ; was seriously disposed, and sincerely touched with a sense of the undeserved mercy he had received, in being brought safe through so many dangers. He repented of his mispent life ; and quite relinquished the habit of swearing, which seemed to have been as deeply rooted in him as a second nature. "From this period," (he adds), "I could no more make a mock at sin, or jest with holy things. I no more questioned the truth of Scripture, or lost a sense of the rebukes of conscience. Therefore I consider this as the beginning of my return to God, or rather of his return to me ; but I cannot consider myself to have been a believer, (in the full sense of the word), till some time afterwards."

Such is his own account of the progress he had made in religion at the time of his return from Africa. The short time he remained in Ireland, he conti-

nued serious and exemplary in his whole deportment, went twice a-day to the prayers at church, and made a solemn and public avowal of his profession, by receiving the sacrament. But his zeal, however sincere, was yet without proper knowledge; his convictions were faint, and below what might have been expected from a review of so many wonderful preservations; and accordingly his impressions of the divine goodness to him began to wear off, his vows and engagements were partially forgotten, especially after embarking again on his accustomed element, and mingling with his former dissolute companions. Though he never went the same lengths of profanity as before, he became careless and trifling in his conversation, and grew slack and remiss in his devotions, beyond what he could have believed himself capable.

The leisure hours he had to spare during his last voyages to Africa, he employed chiefly in recovering his knowledge of the Latin. He had a copy of Horace, and with the assistance of Castalio's Latin Bible, he came not merely to understand the sense of the Roman poet, but began to relish the beauties of his composition, and to acquire a sort of classical enthusiasm. He needed, however, another interposition of providence to rouse him from his lethargy, and warn him away from the rock on which he was again in the hazard of making shipwreck of his faith. A violent fever with which he was visited at the plantains, together with several surprising escapes from danger, as has already been mentioned, broke once more the fatal spell, and brought him to himself. The intervals of business he now spent in retirement and meditation. Almost every day he would withdraw to the woods or fields, these being his

favourite oratories, there to taste the delight of communion with God, in the exercises of prayer and praise.

After his marriage, Mr Newton made three several voyages to Africa, and the West Indies. He sailed from Liverpool in August, 1750, Commander of a good ship. He established public worship on board, according to the Liturgy of the Church of England, and officiated himself twice every Lord's day. He also resumed the study of Latin, with great success, and read several authors in that language, both poets and historians. In proportion, however, as he appreciated the inestimable value of the sacred writings, he began to find less time for elegant or elaborate pursuits, that appeared little better than trifling. His first voyage lasted about fourteen months. He sailed again from Liverpool, for the coast of Guinea, in July 1752. In course of this voyage, besides many unforeseen dangers, he was wonderfully preserved from a conspiracy among his own people, who had resolved to become pirates, and take possession of the ship. But when the plot was nearly laid, and an opportunity only wanted to carry it into execution, two of the conspirators were taken ill on the same day, one of whom died; and this suspended the affair until the whole were discovered. In the distribution of his time, he was very regular and economical. He allotted about eight hours for sleep and meals, eight hours for exercise and devotion, and eight hours to his books; and thus by diversifying his engagements, the whole day was agreeably filled up. From the coast, he sailed to St Christophers, whence he returned to Liverpool in August 1753.

He remained only six weeks at home, and then set out on his third and last voyage to Guinea ; which proved to be the shortest of any he had made. He had for several years enjoyed a perfect and equal state of good health, in different climates ; but in this passage, he was visited with a fever which had nearly terminated fatally ; but on his arrival in the West Indies, he recovered his usual strength and spirits. Here he found an agreeable associate in the Captain of a ship from London, a man of sincere piety and experience in religion. For nearly a month, they spent every evening together, on board each other's ship alternately. While Mr Newton listened with eager attention, his companion's discourse not only informed his understanding, but impressed his heart, and taught him the advantage to be derived from Christian converse. *His conceptions now became more clear and evangelical ; he was delivered from a fear which had long troubled him, of relapsing into his former apostasy ; and taught to expect all from the power and promise of God. The knowledge he received from this intelligent friend, of the present state of religion, and of the prevailing errors and controversies of the times, proved most interesting and useful to him. On his passage homewards, he had leisure to digest and reflect upon what he had heard ; and perhaps it had no small influence in deciding his choice, among the numerous sects and parties with which he had conversed.

He arrived again in safety at Liverpool, after an absence of twelve months. He intended to put to sea again, and by the beginning of November, had made all the necessary preparations ; but this design was frustrated, for he was seized

within two days of sailing, with a fit of sickness; which induced his medical attendants to pronounce it unsafe for him to proceed on the voyage. His business was chiefly in the slave-trade; and from his own account, it appears he had not the least scruple as to the lawfulness of that abominable and inhuman traffic. He regarded it as the appointment of providence: as a commercial occupation, he considered it as respectable and lucrative. Yet he could not help thinking himself a sort of gaoler; and was sometimes shocked at the thought of an employment so conversant with chains, bolts, and shackles. On this account, he had often prayed that he might be fixed in a more humane profession. His anxiety was increased by Mrs Newton's illness, which was the occasion of great solicitude to him, especially as he had yet no settlement or competent provision for the future. A situation, however, was soon procured for him, as tide-surveyor in the port of Liverpool, to which he entered in October, 1755. This was an office of considerable emolument, and afforded him a competency, which he had neither sought nor expected.

Being now fixed in a settled habitation, and finding his business would afford him some leisure, he devoted his time to the prosecution of spiritual knowledge. To this design he resolved to make all his studies subservient, and to sacrifice his classical and mathematical pursuits, which he had still carried on at intervals. His first effort was to acquire as much Greek as might enable him to understand the New Testament, and the Septuagint; and having made some progress in this, he entered upon the Hebrew, which he learned to read with tolerable ease, though he was by no means a great proficient in any of the ancient lan-

guages. He read also some of the best writers in divinity, in Latin and French, as well as in English; and accustomed himself to compose frequently on religious subjects. He had even, it appears, made some small attempts in the way of preaching or expounding; and many wished him to engage more extensively in these ministerial employments, to which his own mind was inclined, as he considered it a sort of criminal burying of his talent not to occupy it, after having so solemnly devoted himself to the service of God. He was dissuaded, however, by the advice of a judicious and affectionate friend, from becoming an itinerant preacher, or settling among the Dissenters,—a step which most probably would have precluded him from those important scenes of service, to which he was afterwards appointed. He preferred the Established Church, though he had at first some scruples about subscribing the Articles; which, however, were easily removed.

With this resolution, Mr Newton applied to the Archbishop of York, Dr Gilbert, for ordination; having in December, 1758, received a title to a curacy; but his application met with a refusal, couched, however, in the softest terms imaginable. No further steps appear to have been taken in this business, until 1764, when he had the curacy of Olney proposed to him, and was recommended by Lord Dartmouth to Dr Green, Bishop of Lincoln; of whose candour and tenderness he spoke with much respect. The Bishop admitted him as a candidate for orders; and on the 29th of April, he was ordained Deacon at Buckden; and priest, in June the following year. In the parish of Olney, he found many who not only had evangelical views of the truth, but had also long walked in the light

and experience of it: But like all other populous and manufacturing towns, it contained great variety of character. Some dissolute and profane, and others carrying their religious zeal to excess; being full of that knowledge, "which puffeth up," but greatly deficient in the duties and charities of practical Christianity. The population was above two thousand, most of them poor, and following the occupation of lace-making. Mr Newton was, however, singularly fortunate in ministering to their relief, through the beneficence of Mr Thornton, from whom he received annually a sum of £200, with permission to draw for whatever more he might have occasion to distribute; and he states, that during the sixteen years he resided at Olney, he could not have received from Mr Thornton, for this purpose, less than £3000.

Another event of public interest which distinguished Mr Newton's residence at Olney, was the intimate connection, both in a literary and a religious point of view, which it established between him and the celebrated poet Cowper, who lived in a house adjoining the vicarage, where he spent many years sequestered from the world; holding solitary converse with the muses, or indulging in the innocent recreations of his little select and peaceful society. Mr Newton wrote the Preface to the first edition of his poems; and his name afterwards held a distinguished place among the numerous correspondents, to whom Cowper addressed his inimitable Letters. A report was circulated, however, and generally believed among Cowper's friends, that the deplorable melancholy which clouded and distempered the mind of the recluse poet, was, if not derived, at least fostered and in-

creased by his intimacy with Mr Newton ; whose mistaken zeal, gloomy doctrines, and severe discipline, were alleged not merely to have injured his health, but to have affected his imagination, and sunk his spirits into irrecoverable despondency.

There can be no doubt, that religion, misapplied, may have such an effect, that instead of ministering consolation, it may plunge the mind into deeper despair. It may be questioned, however, whether the tendency of Mr Newton's ministry, and intercourse with his distinguished friend, may not in this instance have been misrepresented. It is well known that the symptoms of Cowper's morbid depression, began to discover themselves from his earliest years, and that subsequent events tended to increase this melancholy disorder, which had grown into a physical and constitutional disease, long before he knew Olney. Instead of the Scriptures or religious connections adding to this malady, the fact appears to be quite the reverse. It was from the Bible that his distempered mind received the first consolations it ever tasted. When he came to Olney, he had studied his Bible with such advantage, and was so well acquainted with its design, that he enjoyed, with the exception of short intervals, a settled tranquillity and peace, which continued for several years in succession.

These facts, then, would lead us to infer, that his converse with the doctrines of Scripture, and with devotional society, was the source of his greatest happiness ; that in them alone he found the only sunshine he ever enjoyed, through the cloudy day of his afflicted life. His malady, however, which was rather suppressed than subdued, only required some cause of irritation, either real or imaginary, to break out afresh, with all its train

of dismal and distressing apprehensions. For such is the unaccountable nature of this morbid temperament, that any object of constant attention that shall occupy a mind so disposed, whether love or fear, science or religion, even the slightest accident, may be the instrument of exciting it. The friends of Cowper, therefore, might in this case, with as much reason, have blamed the fictions of Homer, as the gloomy truths of the Bible ; for as to the mere matter of fact, the escape of a hare, or the death of a bull-finch, were as likely occasions of renewing the disorder, as a prayer or a sermon. And it is more than probable, that this melancholy relapse had a literary, and not a religious origin ; for the first symptoms of it were discovered in his conversation, soon after he had engaged in some new subject of composition.

Another eminent person who acknowledged himself greatly benefited by Mr Newton's ministry and correspondence, was the Rev. Thomas Scott, then curate of Ravenstone, and Weston Underwood, in the vicinity of Olney ; and since so extensively known, as the author of a Commentary on the Bible, Sermons, and various other treatises on religious subjects. This celebrated writer had at that time imbibed very erroneous notions of religion ; he was a Socinian ; and violently prejudiced against both the persons and principles of his more serious brethren, whom he was in the habit of ridiculing as Methodists, bigots, and enthusiasts. He had entered into an epistolary war with Mr Newton, in the hope of bringing him over to his own sentiments ; but instead of foiling his opponent in this controversy, he became himself, in a short time, a convert to those principles he had already stigmatized as fanaticism, and la-

boured with all the ingenuity of argument, to subvert. This interesting correspondence, which was carried on from May till December, 1775, will be found in Mr Newton's Letters.

During Mr Newton's residence at Olney, he published, 1767, a volume of Sermons; in 1769, appeared his Review of Ecclesiastical History; and in 1779, a volume of Hymns, some of which were composed by Cowper; the only other work he published, was his Cardiphonia, which appeared in 1781. From Olney, Mr Newton was removed in 1780, to the rectory of the united parishes of St Mary Woolnoth, and St Mary Woolchurch-Haw, Lombard Street, London, on the presentation of his friend, Mr Thornton: Here a new scene of action and of usefulness was set before him. Placed in the centre of the metropolis,—in an opulent neighbourhood,—with connections daily increasing, he had now a course of service to pursue, in several respects different from his former sphere. Being, however, well acquainted with the word of God, and the heart of man, he proposed to himself no new weapons of warfare for pulling down the strong-holds of sin and Satan around him. He perceived, indeed, most of his parishioners too intent upon their wealth and merchandise, to pay much regard to their new minister; but since they would not come to him, he was determined that this should not interrupt their intercourse, or deter him from doing his duty. Soon after his institution, he circulated among them a printed address on the usual prejudices that are taken up against the gospel. He encouraged them to visit him at his own house, where, like a father among his children, he used both to entertain and instruct them. Here also, the poor,

the afflicted, and the tempted, found an asylum, and a sympathy, which they could scarcely find in an equal degree any where else. These and other acts of his ministry, whatever fruits of holiness they might have produced, were at least proofs of his affection for his flock, and of his concern for their spiritual welfare. They were not, however, unproductive of advantages to the numerous circle of acquaintance which surrounded him in this public station.

His benevolence was remarkable, and scarcely a single day passed without giving him an opportunity of exerting it. It was not confined to his own roof, nor to those merely within the circle of his ministerial labours. He was found ready to take an active part in relieving the miserable, directing the anxious, or recovering the wanderer, in whatever state or place he might discover them. Among other instances, may be mentioned that of Claudius Buchanan, who has since risen to such a distinguished place in the missionary and literary annals of India. Mr Newton not only received him into his patronage and friendship, but introduced him to Mr Thornton; who, finding him a youth of talents, but destitute of pecuniary resources, generously supported him at the University of Cambridge, until he had completed his education. He was then appointed one of the chaplains to the East India Company, at Calcutta, and shortly after entrusted by the Marquis Wellesly, then Governor-general, with the important and laborious duties of Vice-provost, and Professor of Classics, in the college at Fort William. It deserves to be recorded to the honour of this distinguished protegee, that from his success abroad, he not only refunded to his liberal patron the whole expense

of his university education, but likewise placed in his hands an equal sum of £500, for the education of any pious youth that might be deemed worthy of that assistance once afforded to himself. Besides this, he appropriated no less a sum than £1650, for various essays on the subject of Indian literature, and the best means of extending the blessings of religion and civilization, to that remote portion of the British dominions.

The uniform routine of Mr Newton's clerical avocations, furnishes no great variety of incident. Sometimes the history of a single day might be taken as the miniature of a whole year. In 1785, he published two additional volumes of sermons, on the several interesting passages of Scripture, which formed the basis of Handel's admired Oratorio of the Messiah; a piece of composition then in the zenith of its popularity, and the subject of conversation in almost every company. In December 1790, he lost his wife, for whom he had always cherished an undiminished and even excessive attachment. The day of her death he ever after commemorated, by observing an annual seclusion in special remembrance of her, and producing on these occasions a sort of little elegies, or sonnets to her memory. The same year he had the honorary degree of D. D. conferred upon him, by the University of New Jersey in America, and the diploma sent him; but as he never intended to accept this honour, he begged, in this instance, to decline it.

Old age was now advancing with rapid progress, and making gradual inroads upon his faculties. But though on the verge of fourscore, his sight nearly gone, and incapable, through deafness, of joining in conversation; yet his public ministry was regularly continued, and maintained

with a considerable degree of his former animation; even when he could not see to read his text. His memory, indeed, was observed to fail, but his judgement in divine things remained; and though some depression of spirits was observed, which was the natural result of his advanced age, his perception, his taste, and zeal for the truths he had long received and taught, were evident. His mental as well as his bodily faculties began at length, slowly and preceptibly to decline; though he had no pain, and generally appeared easy and cheerful. He became quite incapable of conversation, and could not even recognise his most intimate friends; though he continued calm and sensible to his last hour. He expired on the 21st of December 1807, in the 82nd year of his age, and was buried in the vault of his own church, where a plain marble tablet was erected to his memory, with an epitaph written by himself.

The reflections which the contemplation of Mr Newton's character naturally suggest, are exactly such as frequently occurred to himself on a review of his past life. "That one of the most ignorant," says he, "the most miserable, and most abandoned of slaves, should be plucked from his forlorn state of exile, and at length be appointed minister in the parish of the first magistrate of the first city in the world—that he should there, not only testify of such grace, but stand up as a singular instance and monument of it—that he should be enabled to record it in his history, preaching, and writings, to the world at large; is a fact I can contemplate with admiration, but can never sufficiently estimate. Perhaps divine grace may have recovered some from an equal degree of apostasy, infidelity, and profligacy; but few of them have been redeemed from

such a state of misery and depression as I was in, upon the coast of Africa; when the unsought mercy of God wrought out my deliverance." It is certainly difficult to conceive one more deeply sunk in profligacy and impiety than he was; more hardened in moral depravity, or more irreclaimable in his moral habits. Yet he was brought, not only to be a believer in the gospel, but a faithful and zealous apostle of it, in a most prominent and honourable station.

The truths which had proved instrumental in working out his recovery, he laboured throughout his ministry to inculcate and establish; not only from the Scriptures, but from his own happy experience of their efficacy. He dwelt much on doctrines which are essential and peculiar to Christianity. His manner in the pulpit was by no means equal to his matter. It was there, perhaps, that he appeared to least advantage; as he did not generally aim at accuracy in the composition of his sermons, nor at any address in the delivery of them. His utterance was far from clear, and his attitudes ungraceful. He possessed, however, so much affection for his people, and zeal for their best interests; that the defect of his manner was of little consideration with his constant hearers. The parent-like tenderness and affection which accompanied his instructions, made them prefer him to preachers who, on other accounts, were much more generally popular. Others might be more admired, but all loved him; and amidst the extravagant notions and unscriptural positions, which have sometimes disgraced the religious world, he never departed, in any instance, from soundly and seriously promulgating the faith; of which his writings will remain the best evidence.

M. DE LA HARPE.

THIS elegant and voluminous writer, was one of the fraternity of literary infidels who flourished at the time of the French Revolution. The disciple and the eulogist of Voltaire, he had early imbibed the tenets of that blasphemous school; and was long one of the most distinguished members in the brilliant and fashionable circles of atheistical philosophy. Few, it appears, exceeded him as a hardened and resolute sceptic; and so firmly was he rooted in the prevailing creed of the Academy, that the improbability of his conversion was proverbial among his companions, and furnished them with a theme for the exercise of their unhallowed wit; as they were accustomed, in their satirical sneers against revelation, to pretend, that the miracle of La Harpe's becoming a Christian, would be sufficient to convince them of their own immortality. Contrary to their expectation, this miracle was accomplished; and he became not only a believer in the truth of the gospel, but one of its most courageous assertors, maintaining its principles in the face of persecution, imprisonment, and exile.

During that dismal reign of philosophy and reason, which confounded the distinctions of moral and social order, and overspread the face of revelation with a total eclipse, leaving Atheism and

anarchy to perform on a darkened theatre, their fearful and bloody tragedy, La Harpe had the misfortune to be marked out as one of the victims of revolutionary fury. It was in the dungeons of the Luxembourg, that the light of truth paid him an unsought and unexpected visit ; that those Scriptures which he had taken up, merely with the view of finding some amusement for his imagination, in the sublime beauties of their poetry—first opened his eyes to the folly and the danger of his infidel principles. The sincerity of these impressions he afterwards evinced in the most open and undaunted manner ; not only defending Christianity with his pen, but, like Paul on the hill of Mars, boldly proclaiming it in the midst of death, from the public tribunals of the capital ; and warning his deluded countrymen no longer to pay their superstitious adorations at the altar of an UNKNOWN GOD.

JOHN FRANCIS DE LA HARPE was born at Paris, November 20, 1739. His father was of Swiss extraction, and descended from a noble family in the Pais de Vaud. He entered early into the French service, as Captain of artillery, and was afterwards made a Knight of St Louis ; but he did not live to attain distinction in his profession, or realize a fortune. He had married a lady, amiable for her virtues and good connections, by whom he had a number of children, most of whom died in infancy. The subject of this sketch was among the youngest ; and the only one that survived his parents, who left him unprovided, and an orphan, at the age of seven. Thus abandoned to the world, without friends or patrimony, he had no other resource but in the charity of some of those benevolent institutions in his native city, where the indi-

gent and the destitute often find a comfortable asylum. He had already evinced a capacity and intelligence extraordinary for his years ; and being recommended to M. Asselin, Principal of the College of Harcourt, who soon discovered his abilities, he received him among his pupils, and in a short time obtained for him a bursary. Here his talents, which were his only dependence, were cultivated with diligence and success. He distinguished himself among his class-fellows by the superior excellence of his compositions, and for two successive years, he carried away every honorary prize. His reputation gained him flattering marks of attention, and brought his society into great request ; so that he became a man of the world, even before he had finished his studies. He displayed a strong taste for poetry and satire, and was accused of composing ludicrous verses on his benefactor, M. Asselin. Though he protested his innocence, and his detestation of such base ingratitude, he was not credited ; and accordingly he was committed, for some months, to a house of correction ; which considerably tarnished his rising fame, and made a deep impression on his own mind. The confession which he made on this affair afterwards, in one of his tragedies, was, that he had composed some imprudent couplets on certain obscure individuals in the college, which his comrades had collected and enlarged by additions of their own ; but that he never had the least intention of giving offence to any man.

Immediately on finishing his education, he began to form connections with literary characters. Among the first of these was Diderot, whose enthusiasm in the atheistical philosophy, was well calculated to seduce the young and unwary ; al-

though from his first conversation with him, he entertained the opinion that his principles were in bad taste, and would never make him a proselyte. In 1759, he made his debut in the career of letters, in a species of poetry then very fashionable, and in which Colardeau, Rance, and Dorat had already distinguished themselves. These he called *Heroides*, or *Heroic Epistles*; which were elegantly written, although they did more credit to his talents than his principles, being chiefly levelled against the priests. His next production was his tragedy of *Warwick*, written in his twenty-fourth year, which met with deserved success, and still maintains its popularity on the stage. It was acted before the Court, and procured the author the honour of being presented to Louis XV. He dedicated it to Voltaire, who then swayed the sceptre of literature; and this piece of homage produced an invitation to visit him, and laid the foundation of an intimate acquaintance between them. Voltaire returned him a flattering epistle, praising his genius, but expressing his regret, that a young man of such promising talent, had not avowed himself more decidedly, as a partisan of the new philosophy.

At that time this infamous sect were in the meridian of their authority. They had extended their baleful influence over the regions of politics and morality, and now they seized on the empire of letters, whose honours and rewards they claimed the exclusive right of distributing. The reputation of every author was in their hands. Mediocrity, protected by them, was sure of success; while talents, which refused to bow their tribunal, were persecuted and despised. The death-warrants of fame and character were at their command; and it

was not uncommon for those who ventured to plead the cause of religion or government, to be consigned to the horrible cells of the Bastile; especially if they had dared to wound the vanity of any philosopher of note. The talents and success of La Harpe, marked him at once as a fit associate for this college of conspirators, who sought to draw within their precincts every writer that could reflect credit on their party, or serve their nefarious purposes. No means of flattery or allurements were neglected; and considering his precarious and unfriended condition, it is not surprising that he yielded to their seductions. Had he presumed to refuse his allegiance, the furious sect would have punished his rebellion by a terrible vengeance. The doors of the theatre and the academy, the most promising fields for literary enterprize, would have been shut against him; and had he ventured to publish, his works would have been sneered out of circulation, by the wit and ribaldry of the philosophers. These reflections, we may suppose, had some weight with the orphan poet in embracing their dogmas; especially as he found they gave free scope to all the passions of youth.

His fame had now introduced him into high society, but without furnishing him with the necessary means of expense. It soon obtained him, however, an appointment congenial to his taste, as one of the editors of the *Literary Gazette*, a journal entirely in the hands of the philosophers, and one of the most popular engines for the diffusion of their pernicious doctrines. Here he first distinguished himself as a critic, by the justness and solidity of his observations. His success as a dramatic writer, emboldened him to make another at-

tempt; and in 1764, and the two succeeding years, he produced *Timoleon*, *Pharamond*, and *Gustavus*; all different in their kind, but all censured with extreme severity, and the last two never acted but once. They shewed a laudable anxiety to excel, but they were manufactured too rapidly to sustain the reputation of *Warwick*. These failures greatly mortified the author, who, from an excess of confidence and vanity, fell into the opposite extreme of chagrin and discouragement. He renounced the theatre for some time, and devoted himself to general literature, which appeared to be more his element.

The numerous academies then opened in almost every town in France, offered to young men of talents the means of rising into notice; while their prizes, if obtained, proved a source of considerable pecuniary emolument. These also were completely in the hands of the philosophers, who made every branch of knowledge serve to propagate their favourite opinions, and held out annual premiums, as bribes to allure aspiring genius into their ranks. For these honours, *La Harpe* entered as a competitor, and few were more successful. In the space of ten years, he carried off twelve medals, besides various secondary prizes. He improved the style of academical oratory, by introducing into their declamations a more chaste and graceful eloquence. Among other topics which these exercises embraced, was that of pronouncing eulogies or laudatory harangues, in praise of eminent men. Among the "Eloges" which our author wrote, that on *Henry IV.* proposed by the academy at *Rochelle*, was most admired; though those on *Fenelon*, *Racine*, and *Catinat*, were reckoned little inferior, either in ele-

gance of style, or exact estimate of character. That on Racine is admitted to be one of the finest monuments that was ever raised to the glory of the greatest poet. His other academic pieces in poetry, are more distinguished for chasteness of style, and facility of versification, than for genuine poetical spirit. In 1765, he published a collection of fugitive pieces, both in prose and verse, under the title of "*Melanges Litteraires*."

With all his efforts, however, he could scarcely insure a precarious subsistence; and to add to his embarrassments, he had entered very young into the matrimonial state, having espoused a young woman, of poor parents, but of an accomplished education. He had imprudently inspired his wife with his own literary enthusiasm. She always accompanied him to the theatre, and became his companion and counsellor in his studies. Devoted exclusively to these occupations, for which she had considerable talents, she forgot to make provision for her family, or guard against those disastrous reverses which her husband had experienced; and after the failure of Gustavus, the young couple were reduced to the most distressing poverty. In this forlorn condition, they received an invitation from Voltaire, to pass some time at his Castle of Ferney, to wait the return of better fortune.

Ferney, at that time, was a place of extraordinary notoriety. It was the centre of philosophical correspondence. No measures were taken by the members of that sect, without consulting its patriarch. The young, who were initiated in their mysteries, regarded it as a duty to make a pilgrimage, once in their lives, to this great temple of infidelity, and pay their homage at the shrine of its favourite idol. This mania was not limited to

philosophers, or men of letters. Strangers of all descriptions, and foreigners from all countries were attracted by the same fashionable vortex; and when the village of Ferney was incapable of entertaining this continual influx of visitors, houses were opened at Geneva for their special reception, the citizens of which turned this idle curiosity of travellers into a profitable speculation. The reception of visitors at the Castle, differed according to their rank or their reputation. Noblemen, authors, and foreigners were admitted into familiar intimacy. The more obscure, who came merely to admire, thought themselves sufficiently honoured, if they were admitted to a slight repast, at which the person who was the object of their journey, never made his appearance. Some, less favoured, could only obtain permission to place themselves behind a hedge, or in a hall through which the philosopher might chance to pass. Their expectations were often disappointed, but they did not regret the time they had lost.

They who were fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of his person, for one moment, returned home satisfied; and if he did them the honour, to exchange civilities, or address them in a few words, it furnished a text for conversation during the rest of their lives. Accustomed in this manner to enjoy almost all the honours which are rendered to kings, and even the worship which is paid to the Deity, Voltaire still found something wanting to complete his glory. He was in the habit of corresponding familiarly with most of the reigning princes of the age; but his pride was not satisfied, unless they had stooped from their thrones, or come from their capitals to pay their devoirs at his levee; and we have already noticed how much

he was mortified, when the Emperor of Germany bestowed the honour of a visit on the devout sage of Berne, which he refused to the infidel philosopher of Ferney.

This literary rendezvous, the brilliant court of the Muses, and the fashionable resort of genius, was in the height of its splendour and popularity, when La Harpe arrived, to participate and bear a part in its gay amusements. Voltaire had erected a private theatre, where he had his own tragedies represented. The audience was usually composed of strangers who were visitors at the Castle, or of French officers, from the garrisons in the neighbourhood. The principal actors, were Voltaire himself, Madame Denis, his niece, Cramer, and Chabanon. The theatrical entertainments were followed by a supper and a ball. In this routine of gaiety and dissipation, Monsieur and Madame de La Harpe were qualified to shine, especially in the dramatic way; as they both were well versed in declamation, and were agreeable in their person and manners. Their exhibitions never failed to command applause, and Voltaire himself always spoke of their talents with praise. He called La Harpe his favourite pupil; while the young comedian honoured him with the name of papa; and though he sometimes, on the stage, took the liberty of altering his verses, yet the irritable old man shewed no resentment, knowing him to be so devoted to his person and his works. During his sojourn here, he was anxious to undertake some work of merit, that might increase his resources, and re-establish his fame; but amidst continual pleasures and distractions, nothing of importance could be effected, and he fell into a state of great despondence. Some advantageous offers were

made to him from Russia, regarding the education, we believe, of the royal family ; but his patron advised him to abandon the project, in hopes that his talents might recommend him to the Duke de Choiseul, at that time the Macænas of French learning.

After staying a year at Ferney, without producing any thing but a few detached and unfinished poetical pieces, he returned to Paris, and entered again upon his career of criticism ; joining himself with Lacombe, the proprietor and editor of the *Mercury*, a Journal which was another organ for the dissemination of philosophical opinions. He had also projected a history of the famous League ; inspired by the example of our distinguished countryman, Robertson ; but the want of encouragement induced him to relinquish the idea. Being, about this time, admitted into familiarity with the Duke de Choiseul, at his suggestion, he translated Suetonius, the biographer of the Cæsars ; which had never appeared in French. But this short sunshine of court favour was soon clouded by the disgrace of his patron ; and he had the additional misfortune to incur the displeasure of Richlieu, being supposed to be the author of some satirical verses on that nobleman. He irritated the parliament, by writing a severe article in the *Mercury*, against the economists ; but the ministry, who were opposed to that body, protected him ; and this broil rather increased than diminished his reputation. It was on the stage, however, that his talents appeared to best advantage ; and his two dramas of *Melanie* and *Barnwell*, contributed to raise him again in the public opinion. The former had a prodigious run in the circles of Paris, partly from its being an attack upon religion, and partly from

the artifice or tenderness of D'Alembert, who shed tears every night at certain parts; which imposed upon the ladies a kind of necessity to sympathise, as all the world would have reproached them with coldness and insensibility, if they had been seen with dry eyes, at the moment when a philosopher wept. As it was the policy of the atheistical sect to seize every incident that might contribute to the execution of their projects, this drama became a favourite with the whole party; and Voltaire passed it a high compliment, by saying it had given a mortal blow to fanaticism. It is quite amusing to think of the importance the Parisians then attached to the merest bagatelles. The reading of a play, was enough to set all their spirits in a ferment. The quarrels of an actress, would have created divisions in the ministry, and thrown a whole colony of the noblesse out of court favour.

Thereputation which La Harpe had thus gained by his various prize essays, literary criticisms, and poems, remarkable for their elegance and spirit, at length opened the doors of the French Academy; into which he was admitted in 1776, on the death of his rival Colardeau. From that time his reputation, and his means of subsistence, were more solidly established; and though he still had his enemies and detractors, and was engaged in frequent literary disputes, they never injured him in the public opinion, nor provoked him to retort with rudeness or personality. From this period, therefore, to the Revolution, his life presents less interest, as it was past in comparative ease and tranquillity. His acquaintance became more extended, and he was taken into intimate familiarity with Turgot, and the famous minister Necker. He was not less a favourite, or less connected

with the encyclopedists ; and was at this time accounted an adept in that audacious philosophy which infected France, and finally dissolved her morals. His poetical and critical talents were still cultivated with great application ; and among the productions which appeared in course of this time, were his *Rival Muses*, in compliment to Voltaire, written in 1779 ; and the following year he gave an *Eloge* on that hero of modern infidelity, who had so long patronized him. His dramatic performances were *Menzikoff*, the *Barmecides*, *Coriolanus*, *Joan of Naples*, *Philoctetes*, and *Virginia* ; which, though they did not obtain the success of *Warwick*, yet supported his reputation as an author.

He gained no small celebrity by his readings, an art which he possessed in a very superior manner ; and which he had greatly improved, by practising declamation while under the eye of Voltaire. It was then fashionable for vast crowds to attend at the readings given by authors, of their own works, previous to publication. La Harpe's success was extremely flattering, as his various productions succeeded each other so rapidly ; and he was invited to make his exhibitions in so many circles, that he was soon compelled to be select in the choice of the audience he honoured with this gratification. So great was his fame that the young Queen expressed a wish to hear him.

In 1776, he gave a translation of the *Lusiad* of Camoens, with notes, and a life of the author ; and was engaged to abridge the Abbé Prevost's "*Histoire des Voyages* ;" an employment so much beneath his talents, that it was generally understood to be a bookseller's speculation, rather than an effort of literary ambition. He produced various pieces in

verse, Odes, Translations from Lucan and Tasso; and a poem in four cantos, entitled *Tangu ad Felime*, imitated from the Arabian, abounding in sprightly and humorous sallies, gay and voluptuous images; and reckoned a master-piece in that kind of writing. The solid and luminous criticisms with which he had enriched the pages of the several journals which he conducted, formed no small portion of his glory; it was in that kind of talent that he particularly excelled, and to which he had devoted a great part of his life. This made him be universally regarded as the oracle of taste, and secured his appointment as first professor of literature in the newly erected Lyceum.

The school under this name, was opened at a very favourable time, (1786), and the popularity of La Harpe's lectures was unexampled. The idleness and satiety of pleasures of all kinds, which then reigned in Paris, had set the wits and philosophers to invent some new kind of spectacle for the popular amusement. This led to the institution of the Lyceum, an academy of the *Belles Lettres*, where every body might attend who had a taste for learning, or wished to acquire a superficial knowledge of science, or to repair the deficiencies of a neglected education. La Harpe's success was unprecedented. The ladies ran in crowds to hear him. His lectures became the subject of general conversation, and were preferred to all other entertainments. His popularity with the ladies, whose taste and patronage were then omnipotent, set the last seal to his reputation. In this institution he smoothed for them the rugged paths of study; pleaded the cause of polite learning with eloquence and effect; and was rewarded in the

most flattering manner, by the attention with which he was honoured among all ranks. His company and his visits were eagerly courted, and he was received into the most polished circles with favour and complaisance. It was not only amongst the ladies that he had admirers; he had many titled solicitors, who were eager to gratify a ridiculous vanity, by claiming his acquaintance, and courting his conversation. These lectures, which were continued for many years, were afterwards collected and arranged by him; and published under the title of "*Lyceum*:" or *Course of Literature*, in twelve volumes:—a work which justly entitled him to the appellation of the French Quintilian, and which has established his fame on an honourable and permanent basis. From the excellence of the criticisms, it is much to be regretted, that the author did not live to finish his course of instruction, which he had designed to continue. Only some fragments have been left, which have, since his death, been published in four additional volumes.

This production ranked him at the head of the *Belles Lettres*, and stands a most splendid and durable monument to his literary fame. "He not only labours, (says Mr Petitot, speaking of the *Lyceum*) to give to persons of no great knowledge, competent information on the topics of his work, but arrests the attention of the most learned. In his plans, the outline of which alone announces a vast stock of science and learning, he embraces all ages in which literature has flourished. Every celebrated work is analyzed and discussed. The beauties of the several writers are happily displayed, and their faults pointed out, with all the ability of the most lively and sound criticism. That which distinguishes *La Harpe* from other moderns, who

have treated of literature is, that he always assumes the tone of the work he criticises. If he speaks of the *Iliad*, we behold him borrow all the rich colours of the father of poetry to decorate his discourse. If he treats of Demosthenes or Cicero; all the great interests of Athens and Rome are re-produced under his pen. If Tacitus is his theme, we are instantly transported to the age of the emperors; we enter into all the mystery of the dark policy of Tiberius, and tremble at the sight of Nero."

The want of proportion in the distribution of his matter, has been objected as a fault in this work; that he sometimes cuts off celebrated authors with a few pages, while others nearly fill a volume. Perhaps in this he might have been guided by the humour of his audience, whose taste was capricious, and who had come for the purpose of amusement, rather than instruction. But with all its imperfections, it bears the undoubted stamp of genius, and its faults are more than compensated by its solid and valuable qualities. It presents to the young student, to the poet and the orator, the very essence of the *Belles Lettres*. There they will find delineated, the plan of their studies, and the principles which ought to direct them in their professions.

This rapid sketch of the life and writings of La Harpe, brings his history down to the memorable period of the Revolution, when he became involved in the public misfortunes of his country, which produced the extraordinary change in his opinions already alluded to. It was then he began to convert those talents to the defence of religion and social order, which had so highly distinguished him in the more trivial controversies of

literature; and that his eloquence raised him a monument, more durable than those proud, but perishing structures, which the greatest philosophers of his age have only built upon the sand. About the commencement of that dreadful epoch, he confessed himself one of those who mistook the illusions of anarchy for solid advantages; as if the Revolution were to be the reformer of abuses, and the restorer of the estates. He applauded the destruction of the ancient institutions; the deplorable consequences of which he did not then foresee; and when the phantom of liberty became the idol of the nation, he had the weakness to bend the knee, as a worshipper of that terrible divinity. These views he advocated in numerous articles in the *Mercury*; but after two years he saw and acknowledged his deception. This produced threats and denunciations in abundance; he was obliged to make continual apologies and retractions, which furnished his enemies with a handle for the most odious calumnies. At length he could no longer dissemble his sentiments, or shut his eyes to the miseries and disasters that were preparing to fall on his infatuated country. He then became an object of proscription,—was arrested, and committed to the Luxembourg; which from a palace had been transformed into a prison, and which proved the scene of his unexpected conversion.

Among the papers of La Harpe, there was found a very curious fragment, in his own handwriting, containing an extraordinary prophecy uttered by Cazotte, one of his gay companions, and who afterwards suffered on the scaffold; foretelling his conversion, as well as the fate that was to overtake many other celebrated characters under the reign of terror. Some of his biographers

have recorded it as authentic, while others regard it as a fictitious prediction; alleging that Petitot, who first published it in the edition of his posthumous works, in 1806, suppressed this fact. Without, however, entering into the controversy of its reality, or attaching any importance to it as a biographical document, it may be considered worthy of insertion, as a striking picture of that flippant and impious levity which then prevailed so universally in the literary circles of Paris.

“It appears to me as if it were but yesterday; and it was nevertheless in the beginning of 1783: We were at the table of a brother academician, who was of the highest rank, and a man of talents. The company was numerous, and of all kinds; courtiers, advocates, academicians, &c. We had been, as usual, luxuriously entertained. The wines of Malvoisie and Constance, added to the natural gaiety of good company, that kind of social freedom which sometimes stretches beyond proper decorum. In short, we were in a state to allow of any thing that would produce mirth. Chamfort had been reading some of his impious and libertine tales; and the fine ladies had heard them without once making use of their fans. A deluge of pleasantries on religion then succeeded. One gave a quotation from the Maid of Orleans; another recollected, and applauded the philosophical distich of Diderot:

“Of the last priest’s entrails make the string
That shall twist the neck of the last king.”

A third rose, and with a bumper in his hand,
“Yes, gentlemen, (he exclaimed) I am as sure
there is no God, as I am certain that Homer is a

fool!" The conversation afterwards took a more serious turn; and the most ardent admiration was expressed of the revolution which Voltaire had produced; and they all said that it formed the brightest ray of his glory. "He has given the tone to his age; and has contrived to be read in the hall as well as in the drawing-room." One of the company told us, chuckling with laughter, that his hair-dresser had said, while powdering him, "Look ye, Sir, though I be but a poor journeyman barber, I have no more religion than another man." It was concluded that the Revolution would soon be consummated, and that it was absolutely necessary for superstition and fanaticism to give place to philosophy. The probability of this epoch was then calculated, and which of the present company would live to see the reign of reason. The elder part lamented they could not flatter themselves with such hopes, while the younger rejoiced to think that they should witness it. The academy, above all, was congratulated, for having prepared the grand work, and been the strong-hold, the centre, and moving principle of liberty of thought.

One only of the guests had not shared in the delights of this conversation; he had even ventured, in a quiet way, to let fall a few pleasantries on our noble enthusiasm. It was Cazotte, an amiable and ingenious man, but unfortunately infatuated with the reveries of the illuminati. He renewed the conversation, and in a very serious tone, "Gentlemen, (said he) be assured you will see this grand and sublime revolution. You know that I am something of a prophet, and I say again that you will all see it." He was answered in one chorus, "It is not necessary to be a great

conjuror to foresee that." " True ; but perhaps it may be necessary to be something more, for what I am now going to tell you. Have you any idea of what will result from this Revolution ? what will be the immediate consequences ? what will happen to every one of you now present ?" " Oh, (said Condorcet, with his silly and saturnine laugh,) let us know all about it,—a philosopher can have no objection to meet a prophet." " You, M. Condorcet, will expire on the pavement of a dungeon ; you will die by the poison which you will have taken to escape from the hands of the executioner ;—the poison which the happy state of that period will render it absolutely necessary that you should carry always about with you."

At first this excited great astonishment ; but it was soon recollected that Cazotte was in the habit of dreaming, while he was awake ; and the laugh was as loud as ever. " M. Cazotte, the tale you have just told us, is not so pleasant as your own pretty romance of the " Devil in Love : " But what demon has put this dungeon, this poison, and these hangmen in your head ? What connection can these have with philosophy, and the reign of reason ?" " Precisely that which I am telling you. It will be in the name of philosophy, of humanity and liberty ; it will be under the reign of reason, that what I have foretold will happen to you. For it will then indeed be the reign of reason, as she will then have temples erected to her : Nay, throughout all France, there will be no other places of worship, but the temples of reason. " In faith," (said Chamfort, with his sarcastic smile), " you will never be one of the priests in these temples." " I hope not ; but you M. Chamfort, you will be well worthy of that distinction ; for

you will cut your veins with twenty-two strokes of a razor, and yet you will survive for some months." They all stared at him, and again burst into laughter. "You, M. Vicq-d'Azyr, you will not open your veins yourself; but you will cause them to be opened six times in one day, during a paroxysm of the gout, to make the surer work; and you will die during the night. As for you, M. Nicolai, you will die on the scaffold; and you M. Bailly; and you M. Malesherbes.—"

"Oh heavens! (said Roucher) it appears his vengeance is levelled solely against the academy: he has just made a most horrible execution of the whole of it. Now tell me my fate, in the name of mercy." "You too will die upon the scaffold." "Oh; (it was universally exclaimed) he has sworn to exterminate us all." "No, it is not I who have sworn it." "What then; are we to be subjugated by the Turks or the Tartars?" "By no means; I have told you, that you will then be governed by reason and philosophy alone. Those who will treat you thus, will all be philosophers—will have continually in their mouths the same phrases that you have been uttering for the last hour—will repeat all your maxims—and quote, as you have done, the verses of Diderot and Voltaire." "Oh! the man is out of his senses!" they whispered each other; for during the whole conversation, his features never underwent the least change. "Oh, no! (said another) don't you perceive that he is laughing at us? and you know, he always blends the marvellous with his pleasantries." "Yes; (said Chamfort) but his marvels are never enlivened with gaiety. He always looks as if he were going to be hanged. But when, Mr prophet, will

all this happen?" "Before six years pass, all I have told you shall be accomplished."

"Here indeed, we have abundance of miracles, (said M. de La Harpe, who now spoke) but do you set me down for nothing?" "You will yourself be a miracle, as extraordinary as any I have related: you will then be a Christian!" Great exclamations followed this. "Ah! (replied Chamfort) all my fears are vanished; if, we are not doomed to perish until La Harpe becomes Christian, we shall all be immortal."

"As for us women, (said the Duchess of Grammont), it is very fortunate that we are considered as nothing in these revolutions; not that we are to have no concern in them, but that in such cases, it is understood they will leave us to ourselves; and our sex"——"Your sex, ladies, will then be no defence or guarantee to you; and whether you interfere or not, you will be treated precisely as the rest, without any difference whatever." "But what does all this mean, M. Cazotte? you are surely preaching to us about the end of the world?"

"I know no more of that, my Lady Duchess, than yourself; but this I know, that you will be conducted to the scaffold, with many other ladies, in the cart of the executioner, and with your hands tied behind your back." "I hope, good Sir, that, in that case, I shall at least be allowed a coach hung with black." "No, Madam; and ladies of higher rank than you, will be drawn in a cart to execution, and with their hands tied like yours." "Ladies of higher rank! what, do you mean princesses of the blood?" "Greater still, Madam."

Here a very sensible emotion was excited throughout the company; the master of the house wore a very grave and solemn aspect; they be-

gan to discover they had carried their pleasantry rather too far; Madame de Grammont wishing to disperse the cloud that seemed to be approaching, took no notice of this last answer, but contented herself with saying in a sprightly tone, "You see he will not even leave me a confessor." "No, Madam, neither you nor any other person will be allowed that consolation. The last victim who, as the greatest of all favours, will be permitted to have a confessor on the scaffold, will be ——." Here he paused for a moment. "And who then, (they cried) is the happy mortal that will be indulged with this special and ghostly prerogative?" "Yes, the only prerogative that will then be left him—it will be the king of France!"

The master of the house here rose abruptly, and the whole company were actuated by the same impulse. He advanced towards M. Cazotte, and said to him in an earnest and impressive tone, "My dear M. Cazotte, we have had enough of these melancholy conceits; you have carried them too far; even to the exposing of yourself, and the company in which you are." Cazotte made no answer and was preparing to retire; when Madame de Grammont, who still wished, if possible, to banish serious impressions, and restore good-humour and gaiety among them, advanced towards him, and said, "My good prophet, you have been so kind as to tell us all our fortunes, but you have said nothing respecting your own." After a few minutes silence, and with his eyes fixed on the ground, "Madam, (he replied) have you read the siege of Jerusalem, as related by Josephus?" "To be sure, I have; and who has not? But you may suppose, if you please, that I know nothing about it." "Then you must

know, Madam, that during the siege, a man, for seven successive days, went round the ramparts of that city, in sight of the besiegers and the besieged, crying continually, in a loud and inauspicious voice, Woe to Jerusalem! and on the seventh day he cried, Woe to Jerusalem, and to myself! and at that very moment, a huge stone, thrown by the machines of the enemy, struck him, and dashed him to pieces." After this reply, M. Cazotte made his bow and retired."

Here M. La Harpe's note of this singular convivial meeting breaks off. How literally Cazotte's prophecies, whether real or pretended, were accomplished, every reader knows who is acquainted with the details of the French Revolution. He himself unfortunately fulfilled his own prediction, by suffering the guillotine, in September 1787, at the age of seventy-four.

It was in November, 1793, as appears from the report of Gregoire to the National Convention, that La Harpe was imprisoned; and in this confinement he continued until August next year, being nearly ten months. At the commencement of his captivity, the philosophical principles he had imbibed from his associates, were, by no means effaced from his mind; and though he never could conceal from himself their odious consequences, yet they still preserved a sort of attraction in his eyes, of which his better judgment could not divest them. Those vain systems which had served to amuse him in prosperity, and to conceal from him the instability of terrestrial happiness, he now found quite incapable of ministering comfort. On the contrary, they threw a darker shade over the gloom of his prison, and plunged him the deeper in desolation and despair. In this dismal condition he could

derive but little satisfaction from the recollections of his former glory. The applauses of the Lyceum seemed but the idle triumphs of ambitious vanity. He could no longer find repose in the annihilating creed of the philosophers, which had expunged immortality from the record of his hopes; nor could he regale his imagination in the groves of their academy, where he saw every avenue terminate with the gallows. The light with which they had vainly pretended to reform the world, had proved the fatal spark to a mighty conflagration, which discovered nothing but plots and conspiracies—provinces overrun with rebellion, and streets deluged with blood.

In this state of ennui, and hopeless expectation, he never seems to have felt or expressed a wish, to fly to that sanctuary, whose altars are the last refuge of distress, and furnish a peaceful shelter in the storms of adversity. Misfortune had brought him acquainted with the bishop of St Brieux, who was his fellow-prisoner, and took an interest in his sorrows. He recommended him, as a means of beguiling the solitude and langour of his mind, to read the Psalms of David, in which he would find poetical beauties that might entertain his fancy. This he proposed merely as a literary amusement, for the idea of religion would have only appeared ridiculous or revolting to the mind of a philosopher; and he politely offered his services, in making comments, or critical remarks on those sublime productions of the Hebrew muse. La Harpe was delighted with an occupation so conformable to his taste, and so much in character with his profession. He applied himself to the study, and soon discovered beauties of a superior order. As he proceeded, his admiration

increased, until he found them to be a higher and purer source of pleasure, than mere intellectual gratification. The impressions thus made, were fortified with other religious books; until the study which he had begun in the ardour of criticism, ended in inspiring him with the zeal of piety.

This extraordinary change, as was to be expected, gave rise to much calumny and derision; especially among his former associates. His conduct proved, however, that it had all the marks of sincerity. His own account of it, which he left in writing, is so striking, that it deserves to be recorded; and whatever may be thought as to the nature of the impressions to which he ascribes his reformation, it breathes a spirit which nothing but the conviction of truth could have dictated. Visions and voices are always to be regarded with suspicion, and as existing in the imagination, rather than addressed to the bodily senses; and it is quite obvious that the consciousness of his past life, and the discoveries he had lately made, were sufficient to account for the sudden effects produced by reading a passage in Thomas a Kempis, without the supposition of a miracle, or the necessity of any supernatural warning.

“ I was in my prison, (says he) in a little chamber, solitary and disconsolate. For some days I had read the Psalms, the Gospel, and a few pious books. Their effect was rapid, though gradual. Already I had yielded to the faith, and made new discoveries of the truth; but the light I saw only terrified and alarmed me, by revealing the abyss into which the errors of forty years had plunged me. I saw the extent of the evil, but found no

remedy. There was nothing around me which I could substitute for the succours of religion. On one hand, my life was before me ; but such as the beams of heavenly light only made more frightful : On the other, death—death, which I expected every hour, and in its most appalling form. The priest no longer appeared on the scaffold, to console the dying sufferer ; if he mounted that bloody stage, it was only to fall himself a victim. Full of these disconsolate thoughts, my heart was cast down ; and addressing myself in silence to the God I had just found, but whom I scarcely yet knew, ‘ What must I do ? ’ I said, ‘ What wouldst thou have me to be ? ’ On my table there lay the ‘ Imitation of Christ ; ’ and I had been told, in that excellent book, I might find an answer to my thoughts. I opened it on chance, and my eye caught these words of the Saviour, *Here am I my son ; I come to thee because thou hast called upon me.* I read no more. The sudden impression I felt is beyond description ; and it is as impossible for me to express it, as to forget it. I fell with my face to the earth, bathed in tears, and almost choked with sighs, uttering loud and broken exclamations. I felt my heart comforted and enlarged, but at the same time almost ready to burst. Overwhelmed with a multitude of thoughts and reflections, I wept for a long time ; but without having any remembrance of my situation, except that my heart never felt an emotion more violent, or so inexpressibly delightful ; and that the words, *Here am I, my son*, never ceased to echo in my mind, and to agitate all its faculties.”

Brought in this extraordinary manner to the truth ; in gratitude to the source from which he had derived consolation, he employed his captivity in trans-

lating the Psalter into verse, which he afterwards published, with a preliminary discourse, in which he publicly announced his conversion. Every day was thinning the number of his fellow-prisoners, most of whom had already perished on the scaffold ; and his own fate seemed inevitable and at hand ; especially as he had incurred, by some expressions of contempt, the resentment of Robespierre, at that time the sanguinary Moloch of the Revolution, whose altars were smoking with the daily sacrifices of cruelty. But the death of the tyrant saved the life of his imprudent censor ; who never had paid so dear for the exercise of his criticisms.

The first use he made of his liberty, was to support the cause he had so fervently embraced. He again mounted the pulpit of the Lyceum, from which, in times of tranquillity, he had, without danger to himself, diffused the spirit of literature, and the principles of infidelity ; regarding it as a sacred duty to proclaim in public, those truths which he had then the misfortune to oppose. His first appearance drew immense crowds, and produced an extraordinary effect. The orator, in a discourse of great energy and feeling, drew a lively picture of the public calamities ; pointed out their causes, and inspired the whole assembly with his own sentiments of indignation and regret. His lectures continued to be immensely attended ; many being attracted merely by the novelty of doctrines which had been productive of such strange results ; and his eloquence, it was observed by all, never was so pathetic or sublime, as when consecrated to the defence of so good a cause. It was at this time that he collected and published his *Course of Literature*, already mentioned ; in the hope that those discourses which had so powerfully influenced the

public opinion, and had no higher aim than to explain the laws of elegance and taste, might prove serviceable to religion. This task he accomplished with great labour; and boldly ventured to publish it, at a time when the empire of letters, as well as of morals, had fallen a prey to the invasion of the most dangerous errors.

His zeal, however, again drew down upon him the vengeance of persecution; and his pamphlet, on the Fanaticism of the Revolutionists, decided his fate. He was proscribed in September, 1798, and condemned to perpetual banishment, to be transported to Cayenne. But his benefactor, the Bishop of St Brieux, procured him an asylum at Corbeil, a few leagues from Paris; and though the most rigorous search was made for him, and an order passed to seize him dead or alive, he had the fortune to remain undiscovered. In this retreat he wrote his *Apology for Religion*, without consulting a single book, but the Scriptures, on the subject. It was from this sacred armoury alone, that he drew those arguments with which he so ably opposed the philosophers. He possessed, indeed, advantages beyond many of his predecessors. He had been long their accomplice. He had passed nearly his whole life in the enemy's camp, and knew where the strong or the weak points of their doctrines lay. This perfect knowledge of their mysteries, furnished him the means of unmasking the hypocrisy, and exposed the bad faith of his adversaries.

In this privacy he spent many laborious months, but which, he declared, were the happiest in his life. His abode was a small chamber which communicated with a garden, with very high walls, in which he occasionally ventured to walk. In

January, the following year, he regained his liberty ; and repairing to Paris, he appeared again in the Lyceum, where his presence excited more and more applause. His time was now chiefly devoted to royalist or religious publications. He wrote a Refutation of Helvetius, and published his Literary Correspondence, with Paul I. Emperor of Russia ; which excited much envy against him, from the severity with which he commented upon many living authors. Some of his writings against the philosophic party, being supposed to favour Buonaparte, who, it is said, offered him a pension of 4000 francs, which he refused ; he was again banished twenty-five leagues from Paris, and retired to his former asylum ; but the loss of his health soon obtained him permission to be recalled.

His confinement, and his sedentary life had evidently impaired his constitution. He was himself sensible that his end was approaching, and prepared to meet it without anxiety. He had always been very exact in his devotions ; and seemed willing to expiate his former errors, by that rigid penitence peculiar to the creed of his national church. In the midst of the greatest sufferings, he shewed a resignation, which was both edifying and impressive ; and totally opposite to the natural impetuosity of his temper. He spoke with his friends of the consolations of religion, but without any affectation of courage ; and shewing nothing of that theatrical levity or indifference, which was the fashionable death among the philosophers. He expired in the sixty-fourth year of his age, on the 11th of February 1803. On the evening preceding his death, M. Fontanes called to see him ; he was listening to the Prayers for the Sick ; and as

soon as they were concluded, he stretched his hand to his friend, and said, "I am grateful to divine mercy, for having left me sufficient recollection, to feel how consoling these prayers are to the dying." His funeral was attended by most of the distinguished literary characters in France. A deputation from the Institute joined the procession; and M. Fontanes, one of the deputation, pronounced an oration over the grave.

In person, La Harpe was little, but active, and well proportioned. His literary life was turbulent, and full of controversy; and he was not happy in his domestic connections. His first wife became melancholy, and destroyed herself. He married a second, from whom he soon separated. He left a great number of manuscripts, both in prose and verse, several of which have been published since his death. He shewed to the last an increasing anxiety to be serviceable to religion, that he might, if possible make some reparation for the injury he had done it; and in his Will he made a declaration of the sentiments which for nine years he had professed and defended, even at the hazard of his life. Some of his dramatic pieces he withdrew from the stage, and forbade them ever to be represented; and retracted and condemned all the errors of which he had been guilty in his former writings. His "Apology for Religion," he did not live to finish, at which he expressed the greatest regret; as for several years of his life, the hope of being useful, and of rebuilding what he had once destroyed, was his only ambition on earth.

JOHN BUNYAN.

FEW characters are better known, or more universally and deservedly admired than the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*; the most popular and fascinating allegory that perhaps was ever written. The history of this ingenious Dreamer is neither so copious nor so satisfactory in its details, as his extraordinary popularity would lead us to expect. There is sometimes a confusion of events, and a contradiction of dates, which it is not easy to reconcile. Enough, however, is known to establish him a place among those who have been reclaimed from the most daring and reprobate conduct, to the practice of virtue and piety; and whether or not the term infidel may be properly attached to one who had no system of religion whatever, and was almost too ignorant to distinguish one creed from another, is of small consequence; since the extreme depravity of his heart and understanding presented obstacles to the truth no less irresistible, than the elaborate and learned arguments of the most ingenious sceptics. From being the most wicked of all his profligate companions, he was transformed, through a knowledge of the Gospel, into one of its most distinguished preachers; and whatever may be thought as to the peculiarities of his doctrines, no one ever questioned his sincerity as a Christian; of which he gave public testimony, by adhering with apostolical firmness to his prin-

ciples, under bonds, and in persecution for conscience' sake.

JOHN BUNYAN was born in 1628, at Elstow, a small village near Bedford. He was of very mean parentage; his father being a common tinker, but a man of an honest character; and though he intended his son to follow the same low occupation, he took care to have him instructed in the elements of reading and writing. These slender acquirements formed the whole stock of his education; and if ever they made any beneficial impression upon his mind, they were unfortunately very soon effaced by his vicious habits; to which he was even from his childhood so incorrigibly addicted, that he was noted, to use his own expression, as a "town-sinner; and had but few equals both for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God." He travelled, for several years, in his profession of a tinker, chiefly in the vicinity of his native place; during which he surrendered himself up to every species of wickedness and impiety, joining in guilty fellowship with his associates, in the most degrading vices; and was even a ring-leader, in their low revelry of profaneness and excess. Though the Calvinistic tenets, which he afterwards adopted, and whose peculiarity it is to contemplate human depravity in its darkest colours, may perhaps have led him to speak with exaggeration of his own crimes, yet there can be no question that his early life was a course of extraordinary profligacy and irreligion.

But though he indulged in these excesses without fear or restraint, it appears he was not altogether without feelings of remorse. He was frequently alarmed, and interrupted in his career of dissipa-

tion, by the compunctious visitings of conscience, which were increased by dreams and fearful visions, such as the wildest imagination could hardly conceive. Sometimes he thought he saw the heavens, as it were, all on fire ; and the firmament crackling and shivering with the noise of mighty thunders. Again, he would imagine himself in a pleasant place, revelling in luxury and delight ; when in the midst of this visionary banquet, a mighty earthquake would rend the earth asunder, out of which started flames, and figures of men, with horrid shrieks and execrations, presenting to his terrified senses, an emblem of the general judgment. These apprehensions, however, though overpowering at the time, had no other effect than to frighten him into a momentary reformation, or extort from him the most absurd wishes that can be imagined. Of these inward and tormenting conflicts, he has given a detailed account in his treatise of "Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners."

One advantage from these transient alarms was, that they rendered him more accessible to conviction ; and in this way they contributed indirectly to his complete and final reform. This, however, was a slow and progressive consummation, and appears to have been the result of a variety of causes. He was twice preserved from being drowned ; and when a soldier in the parliamentary army, which he had entered from a dislike to his own profession, he had a remarkable escape. At the siege of Leicester, in 1645, one of his comrades who had volunteered to go in his place, was drawn out to stand centinel, and while at his post, was shot through the head with a musket-ball.

Having about this time entered into the bonds of matrimony, the religious conversation of his

wife, who was grieved to witness his regardlessness and profanity, had a material influence upon his conduct. He had married without making the slightest provision for a family, or having even the means of personal comfort ; being in such extreme poverty, that, as he records, " when his wife and he came together, they had not as much household stuff, as a dish or a spoon betwixt them both,"—implements, which of all others, we should have thought him the least likely to want. The whole of her dowry was comprised in two small volumes, " The Practice of Piety," and the " Plain Man's Path-way to Heaven." By inducing him to read these, and discoursing frequently concerning her father's piety, who had paid great regard to religion, she prevailed with him to attend church regularly, and by degrees to abandon many of his vicious habits.

His reverence soon carried him to the opposite extreme, for he was so overrun with the spirit of superstition, that, as he says, he adored with great devotion every thing belonging to the church ; the altar, the priest, clerk, surplice, and service-book. Swearing, the practice to which he was so shockingly addicted, he at length broke off ; being severely reprimanded by a woman, who, though of infamous character herself, declared in the strongest terms, that he exceeded in that vice, all men she had ever heard ; and that his example was enough to infect the youth of the whole town, if they came but in his company.

Awakened to a sense of religion, but without yet possessing competent information on the subject, his mind began to be harassed by the most painful and perplexing apprehensions. The liveliness of his fancy, wholly unrestrained by know-

ledge or discretion, laid him open to a variety of impressions, sleeping and waking, which had all the force and effect of reality. He alleges, accordingly, that he had a miraculous communication from heaven, offering him the alternative of life or death; and that while engaged in diversion with his companions on a Sabbath-day,—a day which he had always devoted to sports, and all manner of vice, he heard a celestial voice thus address him, “Wilt thou leave thy sins, and go to heaven; or have thy sins and go to hell?”—words which we must suppose were the suggestion of his own thoughts, and not addressed to his bodily ear. But the association of his ideas being so strong, and the terrors of his conscience so lively, prepared him to admit the most baseless suppositions as facts, and gave to those visions that haunted his imagination, the very form and expression of truth. At certain seasons, he tells us, that the devil would not let him eat his meat in quiet; while at others, he was seized with tremblings and agitations, that continued for whole days together.

He had often doubts about the genuineness of his repentance, concluding, that it was too late to amend or seek salvation; and in this state of despair he was tempted to recur to his former indulgences, as the only source from which he could possibly expect or enjoy pleasure. These visionary terrors, however, had a real and powerful influence on his conduct, and were undoubtedly the instruments employed for working out his ultimate reformation. In this wavering condition, he remained for some time, alternately convinced and perplexed; afraid to continue, yet reluctant to abandon his crimes and companions. His sobriety

began to astonish his neighbours, who applauded and commended them, although he was yet conscious of being "no better than a poor painted hypocrite."

It was in this unsettled state of mind, and while travelling through Bedford in course of his trade, "that in one of the streets of that town, he came where there were three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun, talking about the things of God." Their discourse was upon regeneration, and the influence of the Holy Spirit,—a subject which he did not fully comprehend; but he was much affected by the earnestness of the speakers, and convinced, so far as he was capable of judging, that his own views of religion were still very defective. Having formed an acquaintance with these pious women, he became a frequent associate in their discussions; and with the advantage of their Scriptural knowledge, as well as the example of their modest and cheerful behaviour, an entire change was speedily wrought in his habits, sentiments and dispositions. So deeply was his mind engaged in the contemplation of religion, that he found it difficult to employ his thoughts on any secular affairs. The Bible now became his delight and his daily study. The historical and didactic parts of it first attracted his attention, and were understood without much difficulty. But the writings of St Paul, which he read with great care, but without the benefit of any commentary or instructor to guide him, puzzled him exceedingly; and involved him in new perplexities. The doctrines of election, reprobation, &c. were mysteries which seemed rather to terrify than soothe his agitated spirit.

Faith was a subject on which he found the

apostle dwelt especially ; but he could never come to a right apprehension of the meaning of the term, or discover whether he was a believer or not. In this uncertainty, and to repel the assaults of Satan, who was perpetually suggesting to him the hopelessness of his case, he resolved to decide the question by actual experiment. Here his honest zeal had certainly overstepped the bounds of discretion ; and while we give him credit for his earnestness to know the truth, we cannot refrain from smiling at the homely and whimsical test, by which he wished to try the strength of his principles. Supposing, erroneously, from the assertion in Matthew xvii. 20. that the removal of mountains was literally a perquisite of the true believer, he thought to clear his doubts by working a miracle. Accordingly, while travelling between Elstow and Bedford, and meeting with a small pond or puddle of water in the horse-path, he imagined the attempt might be made by commanding the water to be dry. As a suitable introduction, he thought it right to offer a short prayer ; but just as he was on the point of uttering the important order, some secret impulse induced him to postpone the trial ; lest, if he made the attempt, and failed, the victory would be declared in favour of the adversary, and he himself discovered to be a cast-away. His mistakes, however, were at length rectified, and all his fears put to flight, by a comparative perusal of other Scripture passages. These errors were not without their use, as they enabled him afterwards to counsel others with better effect, and more tenderly to sympathize with their perplexities.

But it is the misfortune of zeal, when not guided by knowledge, to run into extremes ; and from an

excess of profligacy, Bunyan now proceeded to the extravagance of enthusiasm ; joining himself with the Ranters, one of the vilest sects that ever disgraced religion. Their doctrines, however, so far as he could comprehend them, appeared to be impious, and even atheistical ; and in a short time he detected and relinquished their delusions. He next connected himself with the Baptists ; and in 1653, was admitted, by adult baptism, a member of the church of that persuasion at Bedford, under Mr Gifford, from whose preaching and conversation, he derived great encouragement. At the request of the congregation, he ventured to exhort and expound the Scriptures, as was customary among the Dissenters, as a preparative to the ministry. They took no prejudice against the meanness of his station in society, or the manner of his former life ; and being satisfied of his gifts, he was at length called forth, and set apart, by fasting and prayer, to the clerical office ; the duties of which he is said to have exercised with fidelity and success, for a considerable number of years ; although it does not appear, whether, before the time of his imprisonment, he had obtained a regular charge, or only preached occasionally, continuing still to work at his ordinary occupation, as was the common practice among the sectaries, in those days.

At first he was overwhelmed with such a deep sense of his own incompetency, that he would only consent to speak in a small company. He soon began, however, to attract attention, and to become extremely popular. Many slanders were heaped upon him by his enemies, all of which he repelled by the impenetrable shield of a good con-

science, and the most powerful of all arguments, a consistent and exemplary life.

Notwithstanding the toleration granted by Cromwell to all persuasions, Bunyan, it appears, was indicted at the assizes, in 1657, for preaching at Eaton. This seems to have been the only interruption he met with till the restoration. At that period, a severe check was put upon itinerant and non-conforming preachers. Laws were framed without any regard to the rights of conscience; and executed with a cruel and needless rigour, on all who refused compliance with the liturgy and forms of the national church. Bunyan was among the first that felt the storm of persecution. Being naturally bold and unreserved, he scorned to desert his post, or disguise his sentiments. Accordingly, he was apprehended by warrant, on the 12th of November, 1660, while preaching at a meeting at Harlington, near Bedford, and committed, with sixty other persons, to the county jail.

His friends offered security for his appearance at the next sessions; this, however, was refused, as it could not be granted but on condition of his abstaining from preaching, to which he would not consent.

His indictment bore, "That John Bunyan, of the town of Bedford, labourer, had devilishly and maliciously abstained from coming to church to hear divine service, and was a common upholder of several unlawful meetings or conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom, contrary to the laws of our Sovereign Lord the King." The facts charged upon him in this absurd and ridiculous libel, were never proved, as no witnesses were produced. He had confessed, in conversation, that he was a

dissenter, and had preached ; an acknowledgment which was considered equivalent to proof and conviction ; and having refused to conform, he was sentenced to perpetual banishment. This sentence was not executed ; but he was still confined to Bedford jail, where he lay upwards of twelve years, notwithstanding various attempts were made to obtain his release ; application being made, among others, to the amiable and virtuous Judge Hale.

This long and severe confinement, for a matter of private opinion, and for merely endeavouring to instruct others in what he believed to be the true religion, was a flagrant violation of justice and humanity. The whole proceedings against him were scandalous in the extreme. It is probable his deliverance might have been obtained, had his case been properly represented to the superior courts ; but his judges were prejudiced against him, and his connections were too poor to take the necessary measures. The hardships of this tedious captivity he bore with great patience. He used occasionally to exercise his ministerial gifts to good effect among his fellow-sufferers, all of whom were underlying the penalty of the law for non-conformity. Here he made his own hands minister to his necessities, by making tagged thread-laces ; which he seems to have learned in prison, and for the laudable purpose of supporting his wife and family. Here also he wrote his admirable romance of the " Pilgrim's Progress," with several other treatises, viz. " The Holy City ;" " Christian Behaviour ;" " The Resurrection of the Dead ;" " Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners ;"—a task which appears the more astonishing, as he could have received little or no aid,

but from the resources of his own vigorous imagination, since his whole stock of books is said to have consisted only of the Bible, and Fox's Martyrology.

During this protracted captivity, he was several times permitted by the favour of his jailor, to visit his family and friends; and even took a journey to London, to inquire, as is supposed, whether some legal redress might not be obtained. This most probably gave rise to the opinion, that he was imprisoned at different times; though it would appear he never was set at liberty till his final discharge in 1672; a kindness which is said to have been procured him, after many fruitless attempts for that purpose, through the good offices of Dr Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, who, at the request of Dr Owen, was prevailed upon to interest himself in behalf of the prisoner.

Immediately after, or according to some accounts, the year before his enlargement, he was chosen pastor of the Dissenting church at Bedford, where a chapel was built for him, by the voluntary contributions of his friends, during the partial toleration which King James, to promote his own measures, had extended to the non-conformists. Here he preached statedly to crowded auditories, without meeting with any further molestation from the civil authorities, on account of his principles. He did not, however, escape the general obloquy and contempt, in which Dissenters were then held. Objections were made to his poverty, and want of education; though his being illiterate was no disgrace, and no bar to his usefulness or popularity as a preacher.

His moral character was likewise attacked; for

his revilers circulated many absurd and malicious calumnies ; stigmatizing him as a witch, a jesuit, a highway-man, &c. ; that he had his concubines, bastards, and even two wives at once. These ridiculous accusations gained little credit, and gave him as little concern. " My foes," (says he), " have missed their mark in this their shooting at me. I am not the man. I wish that they themselves be guiltless. If all the fornicators and adulterers in England, were hanged up by the neck till they be dead, John Bunyan, the object of their envy, would be still alive and well. I know not whether there be such a thing as a woman breathing under the copes of the heavens, but by their apparel, or by common report, except my own wife." These irregularities, indeed, were vices to which he never was addicted, and which he most abhorred. His modesty in this respect was remarkable. He avoided the company of the fair sex as much as possible ; and even had scruples of conscience at the common civility of shaking hands with them. He objected to the ordinary practice of saluting females, while paying or receiving family visits, as a piece of improper and unseemly politeness ; and when his friends urged religious reasons, and apostolical injunctions for the practice, he would ask why they made distinctions, " always saluting the most handsome, and letting the ill-favoured go."

His conduct as a clergyman was always most correct and exemplary. In his family he maintained strictly the observances of religion ; he was peculiarly attentive to the sick, and in supplying the temporal wants of those who suffered for conscience' sake. He was in the habit of making stated circuits into various parts of the kingdom ;

animating his persecuted brethren to bear with cheerfulness their illegal oppressions; and often employing his influence very successfully in reconciling differences among them, so as to prevent disagreeable and ruinous litigations. These periodical journeys and visitations procured him the title of Bishop Bunyan; and though the name was given in derision, he has risen to greater celebrity than most of the dignified heads that ever wore a mitre.

Once every year he went to London, where he preached among the non-conformists, with the highest applause. Many eminent persons, it is said, among whom was Dr Owen, frequently attended his sermons; and some, it appears, "who came to scoff, remained to pray." Charles II. in a conversation with Dr Owen, once expressed his astonishment, that a man of his sense and learning could hear an illiterate tinker prate; to which he replied, "Please your majesty, had I the tinker's abilities, I would most gladly relinquish all my learning." There seems to have been something peculiarly fascinating and attractive in Bunyan's manner of address. He was perhaps the most popular preacher of his age. Whenever he visited the metropolis, his arrival was the signal of general rendezvous. The shortest notice was sufficient to collect an overflowing audience. In the middle of winter, and on a week-day, he would have had more than twelve hundred hearers assembled before seven o'clock in the morning. Scarcely any thing of the same nature has occurred; and this extraordinary degree of public excitement will only find a parallel in the well-known celebrity of Whitfield.

These various employments, without any event

of material importance, fill up his history from the time of his liberation, till his death in 1688. While on his annual visit to London in that year, he had gone in very bad weather to Reading, to make up a breach between a father and a son, with whom he had some acquaintance; and having happily succeeded in this benevolent embassy, he returned to London apparently in good health; but as he had been exposed to heavy rains, and got completely wet, he was speedily seized with a fever, which in ten days terminated his existence, on the 31st of August, in the 60th year of his age, and thirty-second of his ministry. This event took place at the sign of the Star, in Snowhill, in the house of a friend with whom he lodged, Mr Strudwick, a grocer; who had him buried in his own vault at Bunhill Fields, where a handsome tomb-stone to his memory was erected, and may still be seen.

Bunyan was twice married. By his first wife he left four children, two sons and two daughters, the eldest of whom was blind. His second wife interested herself much in his liberation from prison, and pleaded his cause with great energy before Sir Matthew Hale and the other justices; she survived him about four years, but seems to have had no family.

Of Bunyan's character and personal appearance, one of his biographers gives the following account:—"He appeared in countenance to be of a stern and rough temper; but in his conversation, he was mild and affable, not given to loquacity or much discourse in company, unless some urgent occasion required it; observing never to boast of himself, but rather seem low in his own eyes, and submit himself to the judgment of others; abhorring

lying and swearing ; just to all ; not seeming to revenge injuries ; loving to reconcile differences. He had a sharp quick eye ; an excellent discerning of persons, and good judgment. He was tall of stature, strong boned, though not corpulent ; somewhat of a ruddy face ; wearing his beard on his upper lip, after the old British fashion. His hair was reddish ; but in his old age sprinkled with grey ; his forehead somewhat high ; his habit always plain and modest."

His modest conversation and moral correctness, after his conversion, were always beyond the reach of detraction. The most prying criticism, even malice itself could not fix a single stain upon his reputation, with which he could be justly charged. His natural talents were extraordinary ; his understanding, discernment, memory, and invention, remarkably acute and vigorous. In his sermons he always spoke extempore ; generally with great fluency, though sometimes with considerable hesitation. He was bold in reproving sin, without respect of persons : steady, perhaps bigoted to his own opinions ; and though his piety was sincere, it was evidently mixed with a portion of enthusiasm. His proficiency in Scriptural divinity was surprising, considering his disadvantages ; but he never made much progress in human learning. It may be doubted, however, whether his genius would have been improved or impaired by a more refined and liberal education. The exuberant fertility of his imagination, supplied his defects in acquired knowledge. He had written books or treatises, equal to the number of years he had lived ; most of them parabolical, as his fancy seemed to have clothed every object in the costume of allegory.

But his great master-piece is the Pilgrim's Pro-

gress, which, as a work of original genius, ranks among the first in the English language; and is read with admiration, both by the learned and the illiterate. The fiction is ingeniously carried on; the characters justly drawn, and uniformly supported. The simple and artless arrangement of the narrative, renders it intelligible to the most ignorant and superficial mind; while the agreeable similitudes and images under which its moral lessons are disguised, arrest the attention; and give to a religious treatise, all the charm and illusion of romance. With wonderful ingenuity he has contrived to overcome the disadvantages of his subject, and given to the most repugnant doctrines of the Calvinistic theology, an attraction, which, in spite of the rude and homely garb in which they are dressed, has made them, not only tolerated, but admired; and secured them a popularity which continues undiminished, while the labours and talents of many learned divines, who wrote expressly in their defence, have sunk into comparative neglect.

Few books have more captivated the taste and the fancy of the multitude, as from its judicious combination of narrative with dialogue, it exactly suits the capacity of those who have not acquired the art to abstract or generalize their ideas. It has gone through innumerable editions, and has been translated into almost every language in the civilized world. A copy of it, in elegant binding, is said to be preserved in the library of the Vatican at Rome. Its powerful influence over the reader's imagination, has often been remarked; and there cannot be a more striking proof of its excellence and ingenuity, than the complete illusion which it produces. The young and uninstructed, who are

delighted with it as a pleasing tale, give it all the credit of truth and reality. They never once imagine it to be a fiction, but actually believe that it was communicated to him in a dream; a deception which was further confirmed, by the sleeping posture in which he is generally represented on the frontispiece.

Instances have been known of some, who, putting a literal interpretation on its figurative language, have fancied the scenes of trial and temptation through which it conducts its imaginary hero, an experimental warfare to be undergone in this world by every true believer. An example of this occurred within the writer's observation, in an old man, a native of the Highlands, settled as a shepherd in Dumfries-shire, who had not learned to read until he was sixty years of age. The first book that fell into his hands was Bunyan, the effect of which was irresistible; heightened as it was, in his case, by that credulity so natural to ignorance. Actuated by the impression, he resolved to abandon his flock, and the village where he resided, which he mistook for a type of the city of Destruction; and providing himself with the emblematic badges of a wallet and a staff, he set out on an earthly pilgrimage, in quest of the New Jerusalem. After an absence of some weeks, he was found on the coast of Ayrshire, where the Western Ocean had begun to convince him of his error; and prevailed upon to return.

This production has obtained many admirers, even among men of letters and refinement. Not a few who have regarded the author as a bigot and a fanatic, and held his religious creed in derision, have done ample justice to his intellectual powers: Merrick, Kames, Whitfield, Johnson,

and other celebrated characters, have been among the number of his eulogists. By some he has been praised, even beyond his deserts. They have ascribed to him the invention and originality of Homer, and the magic fancy of Spencer ; by which he unlocked the stores of enchantment, clothed with mortal shapes their airy visions, and raised into life their slumbering images, by the waving of his charmed rod. The rivalry of these mighty geniuses, however, is beyond his pretensions. He possessed, no doubt, a mind highly poetical, and bright gleams of this talent, shone through all the coarseness and vulgarity of his style ; but he was no master of numbers ; and had not the art of embodying in verse the fictions of his rich and fertile imagination. As a useful and entertaining writer, however, few will stand pre-eminent to him ; and it may be questioned, whether any in modern times have diffused more widely so important instruction in so pleasing a form, or contributed more to promote and recommend religion to the world ; and when the whole circumstances of his history are considered,—his early vices, and his subsequent reformation, he will not be regarded among the least conspicuous of those Eminent Individuals, who have renounced libertine or sceptical opinions, and embraced Christianity.

FINIS.





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